BUILDERS
OF
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INDIA

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LOKAMANYA BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

N.G. JOG

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ABOUT THE SERIES

The object of this series is to record, for the present and future generations, the story of the struggles and achievements of the eminent sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our national renaissance and the attainment of independence. Except in a few cases, such authoritative biographies have not been available.

The biographies are planned as handy volumes written by knowledgeable people and giving a brief account, in simple words, of the life and activities of the eminent leaders and of their times. They are not intended either to be comprehensive studies or to replace the more elaborate biographies.

The work of writing these lives has to be entrusted to different people. It has, therefore, not been possible to publish the biographies in a chronological order. It is hoped, however, that within a short period all eminent national personalities will figure in this series.

Shri R.R. Diwakar is the General Editor of the series.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

JUSTICE is proverbially blind and day or night should make little difference to it. But the scene in the cavernous Gothic structure of the Bombay High Court on the night of July 22, 1908, seemed to bode ill for justice. Indian courts do not normally function at night. When, therefore, the Judge told the Advocate-General that afternoon that he would sit as late as necessary to finish the case against the accused charged on three counts of sedition, he as good as indicated what the outcome of the case was going to be.

Gloomy premonition hung in the air as the Judge finished his summing-up to the jury. It was unmistakably slanted against the accused despite the customary direction to give the benefit of doubt—if any—to him. The jury, composed of seven Europeans and two Indians, returned at 9.20 p.m. after eighty minutes' deliberation. In pindrop silence the foreman announced the majority verdict of guilty—seven to two. The Judge readily agreed with it and asked the accused if he had anything to say before the sentence was pronounced.

Looking serene and composed despite the ordeal of his month-long trial, the accused rose in the dock and without a moment's hesitation said in a firm tone:

"All I wish to say is that, in spite of the verdict of the jury, I maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of men and nations, and it may be the will of Providence that the cause I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free."

These words delivered on the spur of the moment have a spontaneous dignity and almost a Socratic sublimity. They breathe the spirit of dedication to freedom and of defiance against the might of the British Raj. And they could have been uttered by only one man in India's contemporary history—Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

It is this image of dedication, dignity and defiance which rises to one's mind as one thinks of Lokamanya Tilak standing not before the bar of the Bombay High Court but the bar of history. All the earlier years of his life seem to lead to that historic moment, and the decades that have passed since then have only vindicated the cause for which Tilak struggled and suffered all his life—the cause of Swaraj, freedom.

Tilak was sentenced to six years' transportation—a light sentence, said the Judge, in view of his earlier conviction on a similar charge. But in the eyes of his countrymen, he was given a monstrous punishment because "he loved his country more than his life or liberty". That was "the inevitable verdict of history" passed through the mouth of Chief Justice M. C. Chagla 48 years later while unveiling in the self-same court a plaque on which Tilak's memorable words are inscribed.

"In this very room on two occasions within the space of twelve years", declared Mr. Chagla while paying the centenary tribute to the Lokamanya, "Tilak sat in the dock as an accused and on both the occasions he was convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment. He was sentenced because he loved his country more than his life or liberty. The verdict that our contemporaries pass on us and the verdict that our times pass on us are not of much value. We must always await the inevitable verdict of history and it is that these two convictions are condemned as having been intended to suppress the voice of freedom and patriotism. The action of Tilak has been justified as the right of every individual to fight for his country. Those two convictions have gone into oblivion—oblivion reserved by history for all unworthy deeds."

The convictions might have gone into oblivion, but the image of the Lokamanya to which they provided a sombre setting remains indelibly etched on the national consciousness. That image is associated with the picture of Swaraj, which he held to be his birthright. Succeeding generations, which enjoy that birthright, cannot but cherish Tilak's memory with respect and gratitude.

CHAPTER II

EARLY LIFE

RATNAGIRI, on the west coast of India, where Bal Gangadhar Tilak was born on July 23, 1856 literally means a "mountain of jewels". Like many other such place names, this one also belies itself because Ratnagiri and the Konkan to which it belongs form one of the poorest and most backward regions in the whole country. The appellation, however, is redeemed by a number of eminent sons to whom Ratnagiri has given birth in the last 300 years. And among them none else in modern times was greater—a more precious jewel—than Tilak.

Nothing in the circumstances of his birth pointed to his future eminence. The modest house where he was born is preserved as a national monument. His family held the hereditary office of Khot of the village of Chikhalgaon, which gave it some prestige but a bare pittance. Tilak's father was a schoolmaster who rose to become an inspector of primary schools. Tilak imbibed the love of Sanskrit and mathematics from his father who passed away when he was 16, his mother having died six years earlier. In keeping with the practice of those days, Tilak was married at 16, a few months before his father's death, to Tapi of the Bal family in a neighbouring village.

It was an orthodox family in which the young Tilak was brought up with its rigid adherence to ritual, observance of the time-honoured proprieties and devotion to learning. His father's transfer to Poona when Tilak was 10 was a lucky accident, as it facilitated his schooling under the best of teachers. Tilak matriculated in his sixteenth year and joined the Deccan College as a resident student where he spent the five happiest and most carefree years of his life. The Deccan College then boasted of renowned professors like Wordsworth, Shoot and Chhatre, but Tilak relied for his education more on his independent and extensive reading than on their lectures and notes. Among his fellow-students were many who rose to eminence, such as M. B. Chaubal, N. G. Chandavarkar, G. S. Khaparde, R. N. Mudholkar and D. A. Khare. The closest friendship was formed between Tilak and G. G. Agarkar, a friendship which was to develop later into bitter antagonism in public life.

Tilak could hardly be called a model student. He was eclectic in his scholastic pursuits and was never bound by the academic curriculum. In fact, he devoted the first year of college life entirely to physical culture. This led to his failure in the annual examination but, in the meantime, it had transformed the weakling that he was when he entered college into a well-built and robust youth. Like all high-spirited young men he loved pranks and many are the tales of practical jokes played by him upon his friends. He also cultivated a love for controversy and a dialectical skill which were to earn him the nickname "Mr. Blunt" and to serve him well in later life. Even in those carefree days, the thoughts of political subjection and the economic plight of their country assailed these young men. A contemporary record mentions Tilak asking his friends "to look back to the year 1632 and forward to 1930". Many were the nights that Tilak and Agarkar spent together arguing what they would do after graduation, arguments which yielded early and rich harvest.

Tilak took his B.A. degree in 1877 with first class in mathematics and two years later he became a Bachelor of Laws. He did not succeed, however, in qualifying as an M.A. despite two attempts. Even before he left the portals of his *Alma Mater*, he had charted the course of his life :

"It was in July or August 1879, when I was living at the Deccan College studying for the LL.B. examination, that Mr. Agarkar and myself first discussed the importance and practicability of establishing private schools on the model of the missionary institutions. There was no difference of opinion as to the need for native enterprise in education, but the question was how to make it successful. Self-sacrifice was evidently the only means for men situated like us. After many prolonged discussions the conclusion at which we arrived was that, if we applied ourselves to the task with the determination of carrying out our idea at any sacrifice, it was not an impossibility."

For a young man with a first-class degree to take a vow of self-sacrifice and dedication to public service was unheard of in 1879. Many must have been the old heads which shook in disapproval of Tilak's decision and even his fellow-graduates, who lost no time in securing well-paid jobs, must have pitied Tilak for his impractical outlook. Government service was then the be-all and end-all of educated men and even those who were inspired with the zeal of public service like Mahadev Govind Ranade made it a secondary occupation. The bar awaited those who desired to remain independent and it was then considered the royal road to fortune. Legal luminaries like Pherozeshah Mehta and Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik served as beacons to many young men of the 'eighties.

What were the influences which prevailed on Tilak to strike a new path of selfless and patriotic endeavour? In 1879 the country had recovered from the stunning impact of the 1857 revolt. Indeed, in 1878 Wasudev Balvant Phadke had raised the standard of another armed uprising in Maharashtra. An unprecedented famine held the country in its grip and exacted a heavy toll of life. The early glamour of British rule had begun to vanish. In 1876 Dadabhai Naoroji read a paper under the auspices of the Bombay branch of the East India Association on the growing impoverishment of India, which was later to develop into that statistical masterpiece *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India.*

Under the direction of Ranade the Sarvajanik Sabha, which was established in Poona in 1870, was ventilating public grievances in a methodical and constructive manner and infusing a new spirit in public life. It did pioneering work in many fields such as investigating agrarian conditions and encouraging the use of *swadeshi* goods. In 1874 it sent a memorial to the British Parliament asking for representation for India on that body. And the next year it was vigorous in defending Mulharrao Gaekwar, the ruler of Baroda, who was accused of poisoning the British Resident and deposed. This incident created great concern in Maharashtra.

All these developments must have produced a deep impression on the minds of the young men who were on the threshold of their career. They must have also come under the spell of Vishnushastri Chiplunkar's *Nibandh-Mala,* which was preaching a revivalist philosophy in a trenchant literary style and with great polemical vigour. Vishnushastri was an ardent admirer of English education which he called "the milk of a tigress". But this did not prevent him from defending Indian culture and traditions from the onslaught of the Christian missionaries or from deriding the British claim that they had come here only for our good.

There is a belief that Vishnushastri Chiplunkar was mainly responsible for influencing Tilak and Agarkar to join hands with him in starting the New English School, but it is not borne out by contemporary evidence. The idea seems to have germinated in their own minds though, of course, the help of an elder and well-established person like Vishnushastri Chiplunkar was to prove valuable in translating it into action. Recalling those days of his youth Tilak said: "We were men with our brains in a fever heat with the thoughts of the degraded condition of our country and after long cogitation we had formed the opinion that the salvation of our motherland was to be found in education alone."

The pioneering trio inaugurated the New English School on January 1, 1880, a red-letter day in the history of national education, although work actually started the next day. Agarkar, however, took leave of absence for a year to complete his M.A. Chiplunkar and Tilak were soon joined by Mahadev Ballal Namjoshi and later by Vaman Shivaram Apte, whose high academic attainments and reputation as a disciplinarian lent distinction to the school. Within three months the number of students on its rolls rose to 500 justifying the proud assertion of Chiplunkar at the end of the term :

"The New English School is a fully accomplished fact, accomplished in the midst of a thousand difficulties, amidst popular apathy, in utter disregard of despondent opinion; in contemptuous indifference to showers of epithets like mad, hopeless, chimerical and utopian, which are the inevitable lot of everyone who would be so bold as to disturb the dull routine of things."

The school proved such a success that within four years the number of its students crossed the four-figure mark, and it proved a formidable competitor even to the Poona High School conducted by the Government. It established an impressive record at the matriculation examination both in the percentage of passes and the number of scholarships won. The initial unwillingness of its organisers to ask for Government grants imposed a severe strain on them, neither Tilak nor Chiplunkar being able to draw a rupee as salary in the first year. Chiplunkar's premature death on March 17, 1882, robbed the school of his guidance. How successfully the institution had established itself by then may be seen from the testimony given to it by Dr. W. W. Hunter, chairman of the Education Commission, when he visited the school in September 1882 :

"This institution, the work of some zealous, able and intelligent educated youths actuated by ideas of self-support and self-dependence, though not receiving any aid from the Government, can rival and compete with success not only with the Government High Schools of this country, but may compare favourably with the schools of other countries too."

The school did not fully absorb the ebullient energies of its founders and within a few months of its opening they were searching for fresh fields and pastures new of public service. They were not long in realising that there could be no more powerful instrument of national regeneration than newspapers. The country's Press was then dominated by Anglo-Indian journals which could be best described as jackals of British imperialism. The national newspapers were struggling for existence and chafed under the Vernacular Press Act of 1878. Poona had half a dozen journals, including an English weekly conducted by Namjoshi, but none of them was distinguished either for character or for contents.

It did not take the young crusaders long to decide to start simultaneously two weeklies, the *Mahratta* in English and the *Kesari* in Marathi, from the beginning of the next year (1881), thus marking a break with the current fashion of publishing bilingual journals. While the *Mahratta* kept in view "the more advanced portion of the community", the *Kesari* was intended to be an organ of the masses. The prospectus of the *Kesari* stated : "We are determined to discuss every subject in an impartial manner and in the light of what we think to be true. There is undoubtedly a growing tendency towards flattery under the British rule, and all honest people would admit that this tendency is undesirable and detrimental to the interests of the people. The articles in the proposed newspaper will be in keeping with the name given to it (*Kesari* meaning lion)."

Although the title *Kesari* was suggested by Tilak and the two words have since become synonymous in the Marathi language, it was Agarkar who took charge of that paper, while Tilak was responsible for the *Mahratta*. There was no legal compulsion then for the imprint of the editor's name and the two journals remained the joint responsibility of their founders and, after the formation in 1885 of the Deccan Education Society, of its members in their individual capacity. Tilak did not concern himself with the running of the *Kesari* except for topics like law and religion assigned to him.

Like the New English School, the two journals proved an instantaneous success, the *Kesari* becoming the largest circulated Indian-language newspaper within two years and the *Mahratta* gaining a reputation as the mouthpiece of educated opinion in Western India. Both were produced in a vigorous and pungent style, and every public issue was grist to their mill. In the words of Prof. P. M. Limaye : "They were always ready to strike at any abuse however well-established and any injustice however strongly entrenched. It was because they took to championing their cause with more enthusiasm than caution that Agarkar and Tilak had to pass through their first ordeal by fire."

Opinion in Maharashtra was agitated by the plight of the minor Maharaja of Kolhapur. The Maharaja's adoptive mother was alleged to be intriguing to deny him the *gadi* on the ground of his insanity and the State's Diwan, M. V. Barve, was said to have aided and abetted her and the British guardians of the Maharaja. Apart from writing leading articles to expose the alleged plot, both the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta* published letters purporting to be written by Barve which implicated him in a foul conspiracy. Other journals like the *Dnyanprakash* also published these letters and the scandal was freely ventilated on the platform by influential persons.

Moral certainty, however, does not amount to legal validity, and in an omnibus suit for criminal defamation filed by Barve against several papers and persons the letters were declared to be forgeries. Some of the defendants got off with an apology, but it could not save Agarkar and Tilak who were sentenced to four months' imprisonment on July 17, 1882. The young and courageous editors had their initiation of "Her Majesty's guest-house", to which Tilak was to return more than once for longer stays. He lost 24 lbs. in weight during his imprisonment but gained a measure of popular respect for his spirited and selfless championship of the helpless Maharaja, who subsequently died in suspicious circumstances. Hundreds of people gathered at the portals of the jail to welcome Tilak and Agarkar on their release. The latter has left a vivid account of their life in prison which, though it did not prove a hermitage, steeled their resolve to serve their country on the lines they had already chalked out.

CHAPTER III

EDUCATIONIST

THE death of Vishnushastri Chiplunkar and the imprisonment of Tilak and Agarkar did not affect the New English School. When they resumed work on October 12, 1882, they found to their great relief that, far from diminishing the popularity of the institution, their suffering in a public cause had actually helped to increase it. The *Kesari* and the *Mahratta* were also doing well and the young men set to work with renewed vigour. Their horizons had widened and their differences over social reform occasionally erupted in the columns of the journals, but the bonds of their friendship remained firm.

Their immediate concern was to put the school on a sound basis and to establish an arts college as its logical extension. The idea of founding an educational society on missionary lines for that purpose was in their mind from the very beginning, but it received the first public expression in the school's annual report for 1883. It notes : "We have undertaken this work of popular education with the firmest conviction and belief that, of all agents of human civilisation, education is the only one that brings about material, moral and religious regeneration of fallen countries and raises them up to the level of the most advanced nations by slow and peaceful revolution."

A positive step was taken towards that end on October 24, 1884, with a meeting of sympathisers for forming a society and electing a council of trustees. Among those who attended were Mahadev Govind Ranade, Sir William Wedderburn, a founder of the Indian National Congress, Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar, Prof. Wordsworth and K. T. Telang. The ability and zeal of the young men had earned not only warm public approbation but also the active sympathy of the Government.

The Deccan Education Society was thus born under the happiest auspices. Among its patrons were the Viceroy, the Marquis of Ripon, and the Governor of Bombay, Sir James Fergusson. Their example was followed by a number of Princes and before the end of the year donations worth Rs. 75,000 were promised for the building fund of the college. It was named after Sir James Fergusson and opened on January 2, 1885, in the Gadre Wada, Poona.

Like a giant banyan, the Deccan Education Society has thrown its branches all over Maharashtra during the last 75 years. It remains the premier institution of its type conducting a number of schools, and colleges, and its pioneering example has been widely copied. Even the Arya Samaj drew inspiration from the Deccan Education Society, according to the testimony of Lala Lajpat Rai.

The success of the Fergusson College was assured although its initial recognition by the University of Bombay covered only the first academic year. Its original life-members made a brilliant team of professors. Apte, the first principal, taught Sanskrit, Tilak mathematics, Agarkar history and logic, Kelkar English and Gole physics. Fired by the same spirit of patriotic self-sacrifice other young men were not slow in joining them, the most notable being Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

Although the average student found it difficult to follow Tilak's lectures, G. S. Sardesai, the famous historian, who belonged to the first batch of Fergussonians, talks highly of him as a teacher:

"While teaching permutations and combinations, Tilak gave illustrations from everyday life and made the subject very interesting. We were very much impressed with his minute observations. He was never reluctant to solve the difficulties of students. After the college was over, on his way home, he walked in the company of students and had discussions with them on many subjects. He could easily identify himself with the audience while speaking on any subject. We never saw him lose his temper. There was never any light-heartedness in his class."

So well did the Fergusson College progress and such favourable impression did the D. E. Society make on the public and the Government that the latter proposed in 1887 that the Society take over the management of the Deccan College run by the Government and amalgamate it with the Fergusson College. This must have no doubt flattered the life-members of the Society, who would have been favourably inclined towards the offer had it not been for the fantastic conditions attached to it, one among them being that two European professors should be retained on the staff on their existing salaries. Its rejection resulted in the petulant discontinuation of the annual grant-in-aid of Rs. 3,000 by the Government of Bombay. This was sought to be justified on the ground that "money in Poona is being wasted which is urgently required for primary, secondary and technical schools throughout the country".

While the College and the Society were thus making commendable progress, ominous clouds began to appear on the horizon in the shape of differences among the life-members. Mention has already been made of the divergence between Tilak and Agarkar on the issue of social reform. What really began to irk Tilak more and more was the increasing tendency of his colleagues to supplement their income from other sources. This, in his view, transgressed their Jesuitical pledge and harmed the interests of the institution. As his protests against the alleged departure of his colleagues from the vow of self-denial became strident, the gulf among the life-members began to widen perceptibly.

There was not the least doubt that not a few life-members were devoting themselves to extra-mural work. The writing of textbooks was a weakness shared by many professors then as it is now. There was also a clamour for an increment in their emoluments which were originally fixed at Rs. 75 per month and an insurance policy of Rs. 3,000. Tilak derided and attacked this tendency:

"Once in easy circumstances the patriotic position of 1881-83 came to be talked of with scorn . . . We longed for more, excusing ourselves on the grounds of distrust in the life policy or growing wants of the family. The cry was catching as it must necessarily do and more so in the case of life-members who were admitted later. These new members had but a dim perception of why and how the sacrifice principle was adopted by us. I only wonder how in the face of these facts we still liked to be called Jesuits. I have tried to gauge the strength of the Jesuitical principle, and I am sorry to say that I have found it in the minority."

It was a minority of only one—no other member sharing Tilak's fanatical insistence on rectitude. It may be, as his enemies said then, that Tilak sought to put himself on a pedestal of probity, only to put his colleagues in the wrong. Agarkar especially who had a bitter argument with Tilak over the sharing of the Holkar grant in 1888, was fed up with Tilak's constant references to Jesuitical principles and practices and openly disparaged them:

"It is more than doubtful whether the Jesuitical organisation has done more good than harm to civilisation and the world and, therefore, nobody can imitate its discipline without making important modifications in it. For no Jesuit is a married man; no Jesuit has private property nor is he allowed to make any; the Jesuits have a common aim, and they lodge in a common house. Above all, they are a religious body in which free thought is strictly forbidden."

It is thus no surprise that the Society's records for the years 1886 to 1889 are "full of skirmishes, running fights and pitched battles between these two comrades-in-arms". Whatever might be the justification of Tilak's scruples over his colleagues earning money elsewhere, he undoubtedly carried them too far in objecting even to their undertaking honorary public service. The issue came to a head with

Gokhale's desire to accept the secretaryship of the Sarvajanik Sabha, which entailed two or three hours' daily work. Tilak sternly objected "to such diversion of energy" and pointed out that he himself had refused the secretaryship earlier. He drew the analogy of Government's ban on its servants taking up other work.

Not content with this argument in which logic was on his side though his own practice sometimes departed from profession in so far as honorary public service was concerned, Tilak gave gratuitous offence to Gokhale:

"There was still ample scope for Mr. Gokhale's energies in the duties of the professor of English literature in the Fergusson College. If we wished to compete with other colleges, we must at least show that we were not behind in reading and work, as we admittedly were."

A crisis was reached when Gokhale did accept the secretaryship of the Sarvajanik Sabha. Tilak's efforts to reopen the question only brought him a vote of censure from the Society's council. He sent in his resignation on October 14, 1890, which became effective five months later. Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar, chairman of the council, declared that "Tilak's imputation of dishonesty to the members of the managing committee could not be overlooked". On February 2, 1891, the council dismissed all his charges as baseless and the curtain was rung down on the unfortunate episode.

It was sorrow rather than anger which overwhelmed Tilak when the actual moment of parting arrived. The concluding words of his 15,000-word letter of resignation end on a note of pathos :

"By constantly insisting on the settlement of outside work and salary I have alienated the sympathies of almost everyone and rendered myself extremely unpleasant, so much so that I am regarded almost as an obstacle in the way of others, and every fault of mine, however trifling, is at once caught hold of and magnified to an incredible extent.

"I am giving up my life's ideal, but the thought that by separating myself from it I shall serve it best is my consolation. While I have been with you, I have not spared myself in serving the interests of the institution and I shall not imperil its existence by continuing longer with you... I bid you, my dear colleagues, good-bye with my heart burdened with a load of sorrow, but in the hope that by severing myself from you, I may perhaps help you in preserving harmony, so very essential to the welfare of our institution. It is for the sake of that harmony that I am making this sacrifice of myself."

Uncharitable critics have suggested that Tilak was constitutionally incapable of working on equal terms with others but such criticism appears churlish, considering that Tilak had spent the ten best years of his youth in the service of the New English School and the Deccan Education Society. This could not have been possible without an accommodating spirit and capacity to pull on with others. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that he had made himself thoroughly unpopular with his colleagues and had offended not a few of them by his sneering references to their shortcomings. His departure was considered a good riddance, and it helped restore the smooth working of the Society.

Tilak found it impossible—or made it impossible for himself—to continue in the Deccan Education Society in 1890. Twenty-five years later, Mahatma Gandhi found it impossible even to enter the Servants of India Society. Gokhale, its founder and first member, had the highest opinion of Gandhi and presumably considered him as a possible successor. But after his death in 1915, the other members felt distinctly uneasy at the prospect of associating with so unorthodox a person. They were scared by the greatness of Gandhi as the life-members of the Deccan Education Society were repelled by that of Tilak. Mountain peaks may appear inviting and impressive at a distance, but it is no easy task to live in close proximity to them. So it is with great men. While the members of the

D. E. Society took five long years to realise this and force the resignation of Tilak, the members of the Servants of India Society were more shrewd and fought shy of admitting Gandhi, who chivalrously put them at ease by withdrawing his application for admission.

In retrospect, both events resulted in the immeasurable good of the nation enabling the two men to strike out their independent paths. The immediate problem before Tilak, however, was to find another source of livelihood which would allow sufficient time to devote himself to public service. For, not even in that hour of disillusionment did the thought of joining Government service or starting legal practice cross his mind. The law class, started in 1889, brought him a modest but regular income. But the ginning factory at Latur in Hyderabad State, which he had purchased in partnership with two friends, hardly proved the profitable investment it was expected to become.

Tilak's resignation from the D. E. Society enabled him to devote more time and attention to the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta*. These newspapers had established a reputation for vigorous journalism, but they continued to be losing concerns for several years. Following the registration of the D. E. Society, they were made the charge of its members in their individual capacity. But this arrangement proved to be unworkable, and they were handed over to W. B. Kelkar in October 1886 after Agarkar had refused to undertake running them with the accumulated liabilities. According to Tilak, he even counselled their closure, though this ill accorded with his keenness to propagate his views on social matters. In fact, Agarkar felt so deprived of the opportunity of self-expression that he started a new journal, the *Sudharak* (Reformer), in collaboration with Gokhale who contributed its English columns. The starting of the *Sudharak* not only aggravated the differences between Tilak and Agarkar but also widened the gulf between the members of the D. E. Society, each side now having its own organ to champion its views.

Tilak's association with the papers continued, and in 1887 he declared himself the publisher of the *Kesari*, which meant its editor too. He was also compelled to become "the next hypothecated owner" of both papers at the instance of H. N. Gokhale who was called from Bombay to manage the Aryabhushan Press where the papers were printed. The circulation of the *Kesari* soon rose to 5,000 but the profits made by it were wiped out by the losses incurred on the *Mahratta*. Some unpleasantness was also created by the conflicting opinions expressed by the two papers, W. B. Kelkar, the *Mahratta's* editor, sharing the reformist views of Agarkar. While battles royal were being fought between the *Kesari* and the *Sudharak* on the burning topics of the day, the *Mahratta* paradoxically opposed its own stable companion.

A revision of the terms of proprietorship thus became necessary. Tilak desired to keep the *Kesari* under his control, but Kelkar, though a versatile writer, was not anxious to continue as editor of the *Mahratta* in view of his professorial work in the Fergusson College and his increasing interest in the Marathi stage. H. N. Gokhale's concern was confined solely to the business side of the press. It was eventually agreed, at the end of 1891, that Tilak should become the sole proprietor of the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta* with a liability of Rs. 7,000 to the Aryabhushan Press whose ownership passed jointly to Gokhale and Kelkar.

The years 1890 and 1891 were of vital importance in the career of Tilak. They marked the great divide of his life. He stood midway assessing the past and trying to visualise the future. Ten years as an educationist had only culminated in estrangement with his colleagues and, perhaps, disillusionment with his early ideals. On the other hand, he had won his spurs as a journalist and had experienced both the hazards and the rewards of public life. Not for a moment did Tilak think of withdrawing himself from it for private gain. The release from the D. E. Society opened before him new avenues of national service. From the worldly point of view his circumstances were hardly satisfactory and he had saddled himself with a heavy debt. But his feet were firmly planted on the way to his goal and (in the Napoleonic phrase) he had at his command 500 bayonets in the shape of his two journals.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL *V.* POLITICAL REFORM

IT is difficult to imagine today, when equality is taken for granted and non-conformity has become the badge of the intelligentsia, the passions roused by social reform in the eighties and nineties of the last century. Apart from the merits of particular reforms, controversy raged round the central issue whether social or political reform should come first. Tilak was in the thick of the fray during the early years of his public life as an ardent advocate of political reform.

The first steps towards ending the abuses of Hindu society were taken by enlightened British rulers. Lord William Bentinck abolished *Sati* in 1829 and widow remarriage was legalised in 1856. But the zeal of the British for social reform was soon subordinated to political expediency and the historic Proclamation of Queen Victoria (1858), in which she enjoined non-interference with religious beliefs and practices, was construed by the orthodox as a charter of a static social order.

Before this transition in the official attitude took place, a deep ferment had begun to agitate Hindu society following its contact with western civilisation. It found its finest expression in Raja Rammohun Roy who is rightly regarded as "the father of Indian renaissance". The influence of his Brahmo Samaj was confined mainly to Bengal and it took several years for the intellectual yeast to affect other parts of India. The Prarthana Samaj, formed in Bombay in 1867, never struck roots as did the Arya Samaj, founded by Dayananda Saraswati in 1875, in the Punjab. Whereas the appeal of the Brahmo Samaj was confined to the educated classes, the Arya Samaj made an impact on the people at large. Dayananda is sometimes called "the Indian Luther". He shook the fossilised structure of Hinduism to its foundations.

In Maharashtra the Prarthana Samaj remained anaemic but the Satya-Shodhak Samaj, founded by Mahatma Jotiba Phule in 1873, grew into a mass movement on the strength of its fight against Brahmin domination. The social reform movement in Maharashtra could be traced even earlier to Balshastri Jambhekar who conducted the weekly *Darpan* in the thirties of the last century. Gopal Hari Deshmukh, popularly known as "Lokahitwadi," continued the good work of Jambhekar.

While the ferment was thus spreading all over India in the nineteenth century, it had also its less attractive aspects. For it created an inferiority complex about Hindu religion, culture and traditions. Tilak said : "When western civilisation was first introduced to us, some of our people were so dazzled by its scientific knowledge and method that they regarded our ancient learning as useless and rushed to the western sciences. Little did they care to study the real nature of our religion or what it has to say about the relationship of man and God. They did not care to know what books we have on the subject and much less to know what was written in them. They could not find out the relationship between these thoughts and our conduct in everyday life."

Christianity attracted not a few persons like Keshub Chandra Sen, who just stopped short of openly embracing it. The Christian missionaries tried their best to exploit the opportunity by magnifying and harping on the shortcomings and abuses of Hindu society. Even before Dayananda launched a broadside against them men like Vishnubua Brahmachari were combating their proselytising activities.

A revivalist movement began in Maharashtra when Vishnushastri Chiplunkar started his *Nibandha-Mala.* Until then even the champions of Hindu religion and culture were on the defensive. There was nothing defensive or apologetic about Vishnushastri's writings. He attacked not only the foreign missionaries but also native social reformers, and especially those who aped western manners and customs. His advocacy sometimes descended to crudity and vulgarity and repelled sensitive readers, but it cannot be gainsaid that his arguments went home.

The battle between social reform and orthodoxy was joined when Tilak grew to manhood. Many of the lively discussions between Tilak and Agarkar in their student days in the Deccan College were centred on it. Agarkar was an out-and-out champion of social reform being at the same time a nationalist. Tilak, on the other hand, felt that political reform ought to receive prior attention, but he never stood for orthodoxy and the old order as such as is generally believed.

Such impression was natural during Tilak's lifetime owing to his consistent opposition to social reformers. Like them he also stood for the regeneration of Hindu society. But he deeply cherished its religious tenets, philosophical traditions and moral values and held that such changes as were necessary should come about gradually and with consent rather than compulsion. He believed that mass education was the best lever for social reform and that in promoting it an ounce of practice was worth a ton of precept. The gulf between principles and actions of the champions of reforms rightly invited his derision.

A dispassionate student of those times cannot escape the impression that zeal rather than discretion motivated the social reformers. While men like Agarkar were fired by an evangelist fervour, others like Byramji Malabari seemed to be bitten only by the bug of imitation of western society. Instead of trying to enlighten the masses on the desirability of social reform, Malabari quixotically conducted an agitation for it 5,000 miles away in Britain. Tilak was against the imposition of social reform by the British rulers, not merely because they were alien and irresponsible but also because of their fundamentally different religious and social background.

Tilak especially scorned those who tried to support their pet reforms by scriptural authority, like the devil quoting the Bible, and he had no difficulty in exposing their pretensions. He pitted himself even against so famous an Orientalist as Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar and countered text with text, verse with verse, and argument with argument. It is indeed ludicrous to take the aid of scriptural crutches when once the need of social reconstruction is conceded.

It was thus inevitable that Tilak should be condemned as a champion of orthodoxy, a bigot and reactionary by his adversaries. When passions are roused there is no room for shades; it is either black or white. But it is strange and unfair that the charge of Tilak being a social reactionary should have gained a historical semblance merely by parrot-like repetition. Not only have some of his recent Indian biographers tacitly accepted the charge but even such scholarly foreign writers as Henrik Kraemer (in *World Cultures and World Religions*) and Amaury de Riencourt (in *The Soul of India*) have given it international currency.

The accusation misrepresents Tilak and is unfair to his memory. As Morley said, both the social reformer and the politician are equally necessary for an all-out regeneration of society. Tilak's preference for political progress was deliberate. He rightly believed that freedom would be the key to all reforms—a belief that has been amply vindicated since India achieved independence. To engage in other controversial pursuits would result only in confusion of ideals and diffusion of energies. In 1886 Tilak wrote a leading article in the *Kesari* commenting with approval on the views expressed by Justice K. T. Telang in a lecture on "Which Should Come First : Social or Political Reform ?" Telang controverted the view that social advance was a *sine qua non* of political freedom. The British people who wrested political power from unwilling monarchs in the seventeenth century remained socially backward until the nineteenth. On the other hand, Ireland, whose social conditions were similar to Britain's, was a vassal of Britain just as India was. Tilak was in agreement with Telang that "political reform is entitled to a greater share of our energies than social reform under the present circumstances".

Tilak was not against social reform but he did not want to force it down the throat of a society for whose uplift it was meant. In 1890 he said in a speech in Poona :

"There has been much talk about social reform. But we have to bear in mind that we have to reform the masses and if we dissociate ourselves from them, reform would become impossible. The outstanding example of this is the fact that though widow-marriage is a desirable reform, most of the reformers do not practise it in their families. I, therefore, think that each one should begin reforms with himself and convert others through practice rather than by theory. Advocates of reform should live up to their own preachings."

Ironically, the first few years of Tilak's public life were occupied not so much by political struggle as by the controversy over social reform. Numerous provocations for this were forthcoming from the Rakhmabai-Dadaji case in 1886 to the Vedokta episode in 1901. The Rakhmabai case, in which the issue was the husband's plea for restitution of conjugal rights, created a great sensation. Rakhmabai's argument was that she was married to Dadaji without her consent and that, therefore, she should not be forced to live with him. This claim was clearly against Hindu Law and the High Court overruled the first judgment in her favour. But public sympathy was aroused in favour of Rakhmabai and even a fund was raised for her.

Tilak welcomed the High Court's verdict as upholding Hindu law and custom. In a bitter argument with Ranade he drew on his deep knowledge of the scriptures to rebut the view that there should be no compulsion for an unwilling wife to stay with her husband. Tilak's two articles in the *Kesari* were a *tour de force,* but he seems to have overlooked the human issues involved and presented himself as an opponent of women's emancipation.

It would be idle to deny that the heat of debate often led Tilak into such extreme positions. In the controversies which were to follow each other in quick succession, Tilak more than once constituted himself into an ardent advocate of orthodox opinion, which exposed him to the reformers' charge of being a reactionary without earning the gratitude of the orthodox, since he fundamentally differed from them as much as he did from the reformers. The unenviable position of Tilak was highlighted by the Age of Consent Bill which was moved in the Imperial Legislative Council on January 9, 1891, following the efforts of Malabari and his friends. Its chief proposals were that intercourse with a wife under 12 years of age should be made penal and that in cases of infant marriage, the bride should be entitled to repudiate the marriage, should she so desire on attaining majority.

Tilak opposed this Bill as an interference with Hindu religious beliefs and customs and organised a raging and tearing campaign against it. Not content with adopting a negative attitude, he formulated constructive proposals for social reform which would voluntarily bind its supporters. Those proposals deserve reproduction as they help to dispel the notion of Tilak being a reactionary : (1) Girls should not be married before the age of 16. (2) Boys should not be married before the age of 20. (3) No man should marry after he was 40. (4) If a man wanted to marry again he should marry a widow. (5) The use of liquor should be prohibited. (6) The system of dowry should be abolished. (7) Widows should not be tonsured. (8) Those accepting these reforms should contribute one-tenth of their income to their promotion. Needless to say, none in the camp of the reformers came forward to support Tilak's proposals.

How radical some of them were is evident from the fact that dowry was banned only in 1961 and that Prohibition is yet to be enforced throughout the country despite its being a Directive Principle of our Constitution.

The Age of Consent Bill was passed in the teeth of public opposition on the ground that it introduced no new principles and merely extended the operation of an earlier Act prohibiting intercourse with a girl below 10. Dr. Bhandarkar's interpretation of certain Sanskrit texts strengthened the hands of the Government. It was significant that the authoritative opinions of Governments' own pundits tallied with those of Tilak who commented dryly: "Government eventually decided rather to be wrong with Dr. Bhandarkar than right with myself."

What is known as "the Panchhoud episode" followed soon after (October 1891) in which by a quirk of fate both the reformers and their opponents were inveigled into drinking tea at a Mission School by one Joshi who gleefully published their names the next day. For a Brahmin to partake of refreshments with a Christian was considered a defilement of caste in those days. The atonement of such sin could be obtained only through a *Prayaschitta* (purificatory rite), which the misdemeanants (including both Ranade—the apostle of social reform—and Tilak) underwent. What is noteworthy about this episode is that while Ranade meekly subjected himself to the *Prayaschitta,* Tilak did so only on his own terms and after vigorously fighting his case before the Shankaracharya, the highest ecclesiastical authority of the Hindus, against his orthodox prosecutors like Sardar Balasaheb Natu.

Tilak's comment on this episode strikes a balanced note: "The reformers want to bring about social reforms with a magic wand. We think that reforms can be brought about in conformity with the spirit of the times and the environment. We all have families and want to live with society. Under these circumstances a compromise between the individual's wishes and society's expectations would have to be arrived at. Reforms accomplished through such compromises will alone endure. Those who only want to live according to their own individual whims should do so on a desert island. Others who want to live in society will have to follow a path of compromise."

Pandita Ramabai provided another bone of contention between the reformers and the orthodox. That brilliant woman was converted to Christianity notwithstanding her orthodox upbringing and profound knowledge of the scriptures, which was an extraordinary achievement for a woman then. While conducting the Sharada Sadan in Poona as a school for girls, she was suspected of indulging in proselytising activities among its students. Men like Bhandarkar, Ranade and Telang were associated with the Advisory Board of the Sharada Sadan and even Tilak was a sympathiser. But it was not long before he began to entertain doubts about Pandita Ramabai's *bona fides* and to expose her through the columns of the *Kesari :* "Christian women trying to infiltrate in our society under the cloak of female education and their supporters—however learned—would be regarded by us as enemies of the people and of Hinduism."

This warning, despite its being buttressed by irrefutable evidence, exposed Tilak to the wrath of social reformers as an enemy of women's education. But it was not long before Pandita Ramabai's open indulgence in proselytising activities compelled Ranade and Bhandarkar to sever their connection with the Sharada Sadan thereby justifying the stand taken earlier by Tilak. Five years later she removed the institution to Kedgaon and made it a part of an avowed Christian organisation called Mukti Sadan or "Home of Salvation".

The proposal to hold the Social Conference in the *pandal* of the National Congress in Poona in December 1895 provided one more occasion for a tussle between the two camps. Fantastic charges and counter-charges were made and some orthodox hotheads were alleged to have even threatened to burn the *pandal* rather than allow it to be used for the social conference. Ranade's decision to hold it elsewhere avoided an open clash between the two parties. the orthodox naturally claiming it as a victory. The Vedokta episode is chronologically of a much later date—

1901—but it also shows the discriminating attitude adopted by Tilak in matters of social reform. The issue was whether to extend the privilege of Vedic rites to non-Brahmins. Tilak was not against it but he opposed the compulsion on Brahmin priests:

"The question was whether an orthodox Brahmin should be coerced against his wish, on pain of forfeiture of *inams* granted to him under the old system, to perform Vedic rites in all non-Brahmin families. The very principles of personal liberty would be violated if we answer the question in the affirmative. I know that every community can freely resort to Vedokta rites if it chooses, but no one can justify the forfeiture of ancient *inams* granted by old rulers under a different understanding."

Tilak refused to go the whole hog with the reformers and pulled them up frequently, but this does not imply that he was a blind opponent of social progress. He had the insight to separate the chaff from the grain. His declaration that "he would not recognise even God if He said that untouchability was ordained by Him" is even more forthright than Gandhi's oft-quoted remark that he would rather Hinduism die than untouchability live. But unlike Gandhi, Tilak was not prepared to undertake social reform activities as he had made a deliberate choice to devote himself solely to the political struggle.

Tilak had enlightened views on women's education and his plea for reforming it so as to serve the best interests of society still holds good. Similarly, he was opposed to child marriages but he did not share the sweeping belief of social reformers that child marriage was the main cause of our national degradation. Against the marriages of old men with child brides, he raised his voice with the passionate fervour of an Agarkar. Tilak was not merely a platform reformer. He practised what he preached. His social creed can be best summed up in his own words from the famous rejoinder he gave to Dr. R. P. Paranjpye in the columns of *The Bombay Chronicle* a year before his death:

"I do not hold that social reconstruction must be undertaken prior to political emancipation. I attach much greater importance to the latter. Without the power to shape our destiny, our national regeneration cannot, in my opinion, be effected and I have throughout my career tried to preach and emphasise these views. When I opposed the Age of Consent Bill, I did so mainly on this ground. I did not think, nor do I think now, that a legislature, which is not wholly responsible to the public, is competent to deal with social questions."

Regarding his alleged opposition to the social reform movement Tilak wrote :

"A true Nationalist desires to build on old foundations. Reform based on utter disrespect for the old does not appeal to him as constructive work. He, therefore, tries to maintain and foster a distinctive national interest before undertaking any reform. A similar change has come over Irish politics... We don't want to Anglicise our institutions and so de-nationalise them in the name of social reform. We mean to progress and wish our country to occupy a position of equality among the civilised nations of the world. But whereas men of Mr. Paranjpye's party would ask us to adopt alien methods, even in offering our prayers to God, we the Nationalists desire to emphasise and preserve the national sentiment by giving due credit to all that is good in the old system but without detriment to progress and reforms needed for our national uplift."

Tilak is equally explicit about widow remarriage and removal of untouchability :

"While the widow-remarriage movement was at its height, it was myself who proposed to the reformers to come to a compromise with the Shankaracharya and the leaders of the Hindu orthodoxy on a reasonable basis. In my opinion, the evil of prohibition of widow-remarriage is not a general one but is confined only to Brahmins and such other castes as have thought fit to imitate Brahmin customs and manners. What I proposed, therefore, was that though widow-marriage is not sanctioned by the later Hindu Law, yet a compromise could be adopted by including it in the forms of marriage sanctioned by the Shastras and thus removing, with the sanction of the orthodox, all disqualifications arising from social ostracism."

To call Tilak a bigot or reactionary in face of this straightforward enunciation of his views is to do violence to language. There might have been some justification for such misrepresentation in the fierce dust of controversy which surrounded him throughout his life. But a detached and dispassionate study of his speeches and writings should enable an impartial assessment now. Tilak might be called a conservative in the sense that he wanted to take the masses with him. But it would be unfair to say that he resisted any change or reform whatsoever. Like Tennyson's "true conservative", he was always prepared to lop the mouldered branch. He wanted social reform to be an organic and orderly growth of the community, not a forced and foreign graft. We may apply to Tilak's social conservatism the words applied by Ranade to his own political moderation: "Moderation implies the condition of never vainly aspiring after the impossible or after too remote ideals but striving each day to take the next step in order of natural growth, by doing the work that lies nearest to his hand in a spirit of compromise and fairness."

As D. S. Sarma perspicaciously points out in *The Renaissance of Hinduism,* this policy is more suitable for social reform than political struggle. "The reformer has to spread knowledge; the politician has to generate power. The former has to resort to persuasion; the latter to some sort of coercion. Tilak understood the problem correctly and thought that his opponents confused the issue and tried to use coercion in social reform and persuasion in politics."

CHAPTER V

SEVEN CRUCIAL YEARS

THE seven years between Tilak's resignation from the Deccan Education Society in 1890 and his conviction on the charge of sedition in 1897 form the crucial years of his life. They marked his transition from an educationist to a politician and from provincial to national leadership. His abundant energies flowed in several directions all at once. He conducted two weekly journals and a law class. He waged a running war with social reformers. He inaugurated the Ganapati and the Shivaji festivals. He became a councillor of the Poona Municipality, a fellow of the Bombay University Senate and a member of the Bombay Legislative Council. He captured the Sarvajanik Sabha from the Moderates. He championed the peasantry in the famine of 1896. He rendered yeoman's service in the plague epidemic of the following year. He was active at the National Congress and Provincial Political Conference sessions. And as if all this was not sufficient to absorb his energies, he wrote the *Orion,* which attracted the admiring attention of world-renowned scholars like Prof. Max Müller.

One marvels at Tilak's amazing capacity for work as one tries to keep track of his multifarious activities and unravel the one from the other during these seven years. It was as if he was possessed by a demonic passion for work. Several tributaries joined and flowed in the main stream of his life giving it a force and majesty all its own.

Tilak made his debut in public life in 1888 when he figured prominently in what is known as the Crawford Affair. His first important public speech was made to espouse the cause of some Mamlatdars who were dismissed from Government service for having bribed Crawford, the Revenue Commissioner, to obtain their jobs. Several of them were induced by an assurance of pardon to give evidence in the case against Hanmanthrao Inamdar who was convicted of being the principal agent of Crawford for receiving illegal gratification. Crawford himself, however, was acquitted of the charge of accepting bribes and held guilty of only receiving loans from his subordinates. His strongest defence was the colour of his skin and his punishment was mere dismissal from service. But the Government went back on its promise of pardon to the Mamlatdars and penalised them in various ways.

Tilak protested against this mockery of justice and sought redress for the dupes of Crawford. When it was not forthcoming in India, he appealed to members of the British Parliament like Digby and Bradlaugh to move in the matter. This was of no avail but the Government of India subsequently dropped its action against the Mamlatdars, most of whom were re-employed or given full pensions. The Crawford affair provided the first occasion in Tilak's life when he fought an injustice with a tenacity which was to become typical of him. The grateful Mamlatdars presented him with a pocket watch which he sported to the end of his days.

Tilak was elected a Fellow of the Senate of the University of Bombay in 1894 and the next year he became a councillor of the Poona Municipality on the persuasion of his colleague, M. B. Namjoshi, who took a keen interest in its working. Although Tilak was elected to the managing committee soon after, he does not seem to have excessively involved himself in municipal affairs and his connection with the civic body ended within a year and a half.

Tilak's tenure of the Bombay Legislative Council was longer. He was elected in 1895 despite the support of Ranade and Gokhale to a rival. The Provincial Legislative Councils, which were set up under the 1892 Act, were little more than glorified debating societies. Even the introduction of an elective element was not without a string attached to it since the Governor was investod with the power of vetoing the election of any representative. A clamour was raised by Anglo-Indian journals to have Tilak's election invalidated on the ground that he was "a rabid journalist and discredited agitator". The *Kesari* gave a dignified reply to them :

"Our contemporaries suggest that in case Mr. Tilak is elected from the Central Division, Lord Sandhurst (the Governor of Bombay) should exercise his right of veto and quash the election. If the Government vetoes the election of a representative chosen by a constituency, the attempts to reform the Legislative Councils and the slight good done by the Indian Councils Act of 1892 will be nullified."

The farcical character of the Council is evident from the fact that during Tilak's first term of two years it met barely for eight days and worked for less than 36 hours. Tilak made the best of the opportunity by active participation in the debates. Like Gokhale, he was a diligent student of blue-books. He closely scrutinised the working of the Revenue, Excise and Forest Departments and pointed out : "The revenue of the Presidency has increased by about 5.5 crores of rupees during the last 25 years. Land, Forest and Abkari have all been made to yield as much as possible. And out of the revenues so realised only a small portion has been devoted to the material improvement of the Province."

Tilak's membership of the Legislative Council coincided with the famine in Maharashtra, and he utilised the forum for drawing official attention to the acute sufferings of the people, which were due to the delay in adopting relief measures. When as a member of the legislature he was once criticised for plain-speaking, he observed : "A membership is, as I view it, no sop or gag intended to stop honest and fair criticism. But if it is, I should certainly give it up rather than consent to draw the curtain over the gross negligence or the palpable errors of officials however high they may be." Tilak was re-elected to the Legislative Council for a second term in 1897, but he resigned when a case for sedition was filed against him.

The year 1895 was notable for Tilak's capture of the Sarvajanik Sabha, which had earned a unique reputation for close study of public questions and presentation of non-official opinion for the Government's consideration. Established fifteen years before the birth of the Indian National Congress, the Sarvajanik Sabha was recognised as a leading political organisation in the country. Its first zealous secretary, Ganesh Vasudev Joshi (known popularly as "Sarvajanik Kaka"), bequeathed traditions of painstaking study of public questions. The Sabha also ran a quarterly journal to which Ranade frequently contributed.

It may be recalled that Gokhale's acceptance of the secretaryship of the Sarvajanik Sabha in 1890 was one of the points of dispute between Tilak and other members of the Deccan Education Society. From its very inception Ranade was the guiding spirit of the Sabha. The main reason that impelled Tilak to gain its control was to make it reflect the prevailing temper of public opinion. The important offices were filled by Tilak's men except the secretaryship, which was retained by Gokhale. The latter subsequently resigned, and three months later, under the aegis of Ranade, formed a rival association called the Deccan Sabha. This event is regarded as marking the birth of the "Moderate" or "Liberal" party, for it was then that Ranade issued his famous enunciation of moderation and liberalism.

Tilak considered the formation of the Deccan Sabha an undemocratic step. He repudiated the charge of extremism levelled against him and pointed out that even when the Sabha was under the control of Ranade, it was accused of disloyal activities by the Government: "We have been accustomed to the terms 'Moderates' and 'Extremists' in social reform controversies. But we refuse to accept these artificial differences in politics. Am I going to destroy the British Government? And are Mr. Ranade and

Prof. Gokhale going to be its saviours ? To plume oneself as a Moderate and to say that others are running after the impossible and insinuate that they are actuated by seditious motives shows the height of impudence."

The Congress was founded five years after Tilak entered public life, but it was not until 1889 that he first attended its session in Bombay. Two other young men, who were to carve their names as national leaders, also appeared on the Congress platform for the first time that year. They were Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Lala Lajpat Rai. Bepin Chandra Pal whose name was to complete the popular trio of national leadership—Lal-Bal-Pal—had joined the Congress three years earlier. "Joining the Congress", however, was a misnomer since that body was only an annual gathering, where long-winded speeches were delivered. For the rest of the year the Congress remained dormant. Even so, it reflected political awakening and attracted those who desired to serve the country.

The honour of representing Poona at the first session of the Congress belonged to Tilak's colleagues, V. S. Apte and G. G. Agarkar. Tilak took a keen interest in its affairs through the columns of the *Kesari* which supported the view that the Congress should devote itself exclusively to political reform. It might be a revelation to many that the Congress, as first conceived by Mr. A. O. Hume, was meant to be a forum for social reform and that it was Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, who advised that it should be a political organisation. Tilak's debut in the Congress was marked by his amendment to the resolution on the reform of Legislative Councils that "elections to the Imperial Legislatures shall be made by the elected members of the Provincial Councils". Gokhale supported the amendment but it was lost. Tilak made journalistic history by publishing the weekly *Kesari* as a daily from Bombay during its session.

Beginning with 1889, Tilak attended almost every session of the Congress. At the 1891 Nagpur session, he was given the honour of moving the resolution on the Arms

Act. Since it was the first major speech of Tilak on the Congress platform and the subject was to recur again and again in its proceedings, a few extracts deserve reproduction :

"Already the Government is complaining of difficulty in recruiting for the army; I fear that, unless they modify their present policy, that difficulty will increase, partly because they are, by their existing system, emasculating the more warlike communities and partly because doubt is growing up about serving a Government which treats its subjects with the distrust with which, judging from their policy in all such matters, they appear to regard us all. It will be a bad thing for the Government and for India if those obstacles to recruiting are allowed to remain. It will lead to a state of things that I do not think we can permit to evolve without a protest such as this resolution embodies."

The resolution was passed unanimously and Tilak's speech made a striking impression on the audience. He was looked upon as a coming man. At the 1893 session, while supporting the demand for permanent settlement, he refuted the charge that the Congress existed for the benefit of the educated classes : "We are not seeking to benefit that class, but the poor classes and I shall point out that coming as I do from Bombay, I do not plead for the zamindars but for the ryots."

Tilak laid stress on the service of the people and on the Congress developing into an organisation of the masses. Even Hume, whose original appeal was addressed to "fifty good men and true", had begun to think on these lines. In February 1892 he issued a circular asking Congressmen not to await Government favours but to agitate for the redress of their grievances. The *Kesari* extended full support to Hume.

In 1891 Tilak was elected one of the three secretaries of the Bombay Provincial Political Conference, the other two being D. E. Wacha and Chimanlal H. Setalvad. At its annual session he condemned the excise policy of the Bombay Government and demanded that the power to open or close liquor shops should no longer vest with the Excise Department which was only concerned with increasing its revenue. Several motions on the manufacture of salt and free grazing in open forest areas were passed. Tilak's hold over the conference was seen in its resolution opposing the Age of Consent Bill. He, however, was becoming disillusioned about the outcome of all such resolutions. The *Mahratta* wrote :

"While there has been a good deal of tall talk on our part through Congresses and conferences and a great deal of rosy assurances from rulers of the land, little has been really achieved during the past six years by way of either political or industrial prosperity. . . Next December the Indian National Congress will enter upon its sixth year, but what demand of the people has been granted ? The answer is very discouraging."

The session of the Congress in Poona in 1895 brought on a headlong collision between Tilak's group and the social reform party on the seemingly trivial issue of holding the Social Conference session in the Congress *pandal,* to which a passing allusion has been made in the last chapter. The practice had by then become common, but it was against the declared Congress policy of not involving itself in social reform. No less a person than Dadabhai Naoroji had laid down this policy while presiding over the second session of the Congress at Calcutta and nobody could accuse him of being against social reform. The policy was reaffirmed by Hume during the controversy over the Age of Consent Bill.

The Tilak group was thus justified in demanding that the Social Conference should not be held in the Congress *pandal* though the methods adopted for backing the demand were objectionable. The threats of burning the *pandal* made Gokhale, one of the secretaries, nervous and he sent an S.O.S. to D.E. Wacha to visit Poona. The latter has given an amusing account of this incident in his reminiscences.

Tilak remained firm on his stand. But firmer still was his desire to maintain the unity of the Congress and make a success of the Poona session. In a public appeal he said:

"Everyone whether orthodox or heterodox should join in and support the Congress movement. A Congress in Poona cannot be regarded as a success unless the majority of its citizens joins it enthusiastically. We must approach the trader, the artisan and the working man as well as the educated classes and make all of them subscribe to the Congress fund. In order to do this, we must appeal to each of them in a manner so as not to offend their susceptibilities unnecessarily. The Congress eventually aims at being a Congress of the people and the object cannot be achieved unless an effort is made to approach the classes that have not hitherto taken much interest in it.

"If the masses are drawn to the Congress, it is possible that they may not lend their support directly or indirectly to the cause of the Social Conference. It is this apprehension that makes the friends of social reform restrict the scope of their work for the Congress within a safe narrow circle. One party wishes to draw to the Congress as large a portion of the public as it possibly can, irrespective of the question of social reform; the other does not wish to go much beyond the advocates of reform. The real point at issue is whether the Congress in Poona is to be a Congress of the people or of a particular section of it. If the friends of social reform are not willing to respect public opinion which, I regret to say, some of them are prepared to characterise as 'brute force', I for one am not prepared to make a split in the Congress camp by persisting in claiming a recognition of the views of the majority of the public."

This gesture and Tilak's subsequent resignation of the secretaryship of the reception committee failed to have any effect on either camp and the bickerings became more and more bitter. It was even feared that the session would be marred by violent demonstrations. On his arrival in Poona, the president-elect of the Congress, Surendranath Banerjea, prevailed upon Ranade to hold the Social Conference session elsewhere. The reformers were chagrined to receive the following message from the Congress President since it amounted to a complete vindication of Tilak's views on social reform : "The *raison d'être* for excluding social questions from our deliberations is that, if we were to take up such questions, it might lead to serious differences ultimately culminating in a schism and it is a matter of the first importance to prevent a split."

Tilak is accused of having played into the hands of reactionary elements in Poona on this occasion. While it may be true that but for the initial support of Tilak these elements would not have been emboldened to commit the excesses they did, the appeal cited above shows that his attitude was based not on expediency but on principles, not on the desire to gain cheap popularity but on the necessity of winning mass support for the Congress. "The Congress will be of the people", he wrote in the *Mahratta* on November 10, "if hundreds and thousands are allowed to take part in it by being present in or around the gathering and expressing their consent to what the leaders say."

It was this keenness for mass contacts that impelled Tilak's activities. The Ganapati and Shivaji festivals were also intended to instil a new awakening into the people. And even in the midst of his humanitarian work during the famine and plague havoc in the next two years, he never lost sight of this primary objective.

CHAPTER VI

NATIONAL FESTIVALS

THE Ganapati and Shivaji festivals are now so commonly observed in Maharashtra like other religious celebrations that the present generation would find it hard to believe that they were started less than 70 years ago by Tilak. The annual Ganapati worship is an ancient ritual, but Tilak transformed it into a social occasion. No other festival is now observed in Maharashtra in such lavish, organised and universal manner as is the Ganapati festival. It is true that its socio-political purpose is being increasingly subordinated to its entertainment aspects, but it undoubtedly remains the pre-eminent festival in Maharashtra as is the Durga Puja in Bengal or the Ramlila in the North.

The elephant-headed Ganapati or Ganesh is a favourite god in the Hindu pantheon. He is the presiding deity of learning and "a remover of obstacles". His favours are invoked on all ceremonial occasions. Tilak could not have found a more popular figure in mythology to divert the Hindus from participation in the Muharram observance, for that was the immediate object of the inauguration of the Ganapati festival in 1893. Joining each other's festivals is a happy way of establishing and preserving communal accord, but relations between the Hindus and the Muslims were strained following a series of communal riots in 1890 and the succeeding years, the most serious of which occurred on August 11, 1893, in Bombay. The Ganapati festival was frankly conceived in a spirit of protest as much against the anti-Hindu activities of some Muslims as the partial attitude adopted towards them by the Government. It quickly caught public fancy and proved a useful agency for social consolidation and political awakening.

The imitative character of the Ganapati festival, which was ridiculed by its opponents in the reformers' camp, was more or less unavoidable "as the departing party always carries with it its latest tastes, impressions and habits". Tilak observed :

"Those who say that the procession of Ganapati is an imitation of the *tabuts* of Muslims have not seen the Bhajan clubs on the occasion of the Ekadashi of Ashadh and Kartik. The playing of *lezim,* the beating of large drums and such other things are observed in every fair. For the last two or three hundred years, some of us even though professing the Hindu faith used to make vows to Muslim gods or heroes during the Muhurram. It was because we saw God in all beings. But Muslims, forgetting our long-standing friendship, played into the hands of undesirable people and began a regular campaign of harassing Hindu religious mendicants. That inevitably led to estrangement."

Tilak not only took a prominent part in organising the Ganapati festival in Poona but also did his best to popularise it all over Maharashtra by public lectures and articles in the *Kesari.* He referred to the Olympic festival of ancient Greece and to similar festivals of other countries and exhorted the public to participate wholeheartedly in the Ganapati festival which, from the very beginning, was observed without distinction of caste.

"Religious thoughts and devotion", said Tilak, "may be possible even in solitude, yet demonstration and *éclat* are essential to the awakening of masses. Through this nationalist appeal, the worship of Ganapati spread from the family circle to the public square. The transition is noteworthy since (despite some exceptions) Hindu religious worship is largely a matter of individual or family worship. Congregational worship as that in Christianity or Islam is not common. But nationalism provided the necessary social cement in this case."

Although the emphasis of the festival was on social consolidation, it also helped political awakening. Tilak made no attempt to disguise its utility in this field : "When we know that Christian ecclesiasts can make references to controversial political matters from the pulpit, we do not see why the festival *melawalas* should be debarred from saying a thing or two about the political conditions that they see all around them. It will be seen, therefore, that there is not much wrong in principle if, occasionally, we find songs treating a subject not strictly religious. It is disingenuous to attack this essentially religious festival as a cloak for political education."

Tilak's critics condemned the festivals as a transparent means of anti-Government propaganda. Sir Valentine Chirol observed in *Indian Unrest :*

"These festivals gave occasion for theatrical performances and religious songs, in which the legends of Hindu mythology were skilfully exploited to stir up hatred of the foreigner—and *mlechha,* the term employed for foreigner, applied equally to Europeans and to Mahomedans—as well as to tumultuous processions only too well calculated to provoke affrays with the Mahomedans and with the police which, in turn, led to judicial proceedings that served as a fresh excuse for noisy protests and inflammatory pleadings. With the Ganapati celebrations the area of Tilak's propaganda was widely increased."

The Shivaji Festival was inaugurated in 1896. If Ganapati was a mythological character, Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha Empire, was a historical figure. How closely Maharashtrian sentiment is bound up with Shivaji was highlighted when even the British rulers utilised his name in aid of recruitment in Maharashtra in the two World Wars. Tilak's proposal to hold the first Shivaji festival at Raigad, where he was crowned and breathed his last, received an enthusiastic response from the people at large as well as the Sardars and Princes, several of whom were present at the preliminary meeting at Poona. Tilak remarked at the meeting that, while it was possible to raise a memorial to Shivaji with the donation of a single prince like the

Maharaja of Kolhapur, it would be more appropriate if the maximum number of common people joined hands for that purpose. Even the Governor of Bombay was favourably inclined towards the proposal at first.

Actually, however, the descendants of Shivaji had done precious little to preserve the *chhatri* (tomb) and other monuments at Raigad and elsewhere of the illustrious founder of their line. It was a paper read by R. P. Karkeria, a Parsi scholar, before the Royal Asiatic Society, Bombay, on Shivaji and his forts that attracted Tilak's attention to this issue. His immediate concern seems to have been only to repair the monuments. But the possibilities of instituting a regular political festival around so great and popular a hero soon struck him. Tilak wrote in *Mahratta :*

"Hero-worship is a thing deeply implanted in human nature and our political aspirations need all the strength which the worship of an Indian hero is likely to inspire into our minds. For this purpose, there can be no better person than Shivaji. We are not against a festival being started in honour of Akbar or any other figure from Indian history. Such festivals will have their own importance but that of Shivaji has a peculiar value of its own for the whole country and it is the duty of everyone to see that this character of the festival is not ignored or misrepresented. Every hero, be he Indian or European, acts according to the spirit of his times. If this principle is accepted, we can find nothing in Shivaij's life to which we can take exception. What makes Shivaji a national hero is the spirit which actuated him throughout and not his deeds as such."

Tilak was particularly anxious to refute the charge of Anglo-Indian critics that the Shivaji festival was meant to rouse the Hindus against the Muslims. Shivaji, he pointed out, scrupulously respected the religious susceptibilities of the Muslims, not a few of whom sided with him against the Moghuls. He drew the analogy of Britain honouring Nelson and France worshipping Napoleon without straining their mutual relations. He assured the Muslims :

"The Shivaji festival is not celebrated to alienate or even to irritate you. Times are changed and the Mahomedans and the Hindus are in the same boat so far as the political conditions of the people are concerned. Can we not both of us derive inspiration from the life of Shivaji under these circumstances?"

Although the appeal received favourable response from a few enlightened Muslims, the community as a whole continued to be deeply suspicious of and hostile to the Ganapati and Shivaji festivals. Their apprehensions were sedulously fostered by Anglo-Indian journals which lost no opportunity to misrepresent Tilak as being as much against the Muslims as against the British. Even Hindu critics of Tilak joined this chorus despite their admission that Government's attitude was overtly partial to Muslims and that the Hindus were driven to organise themselves in sheer self-respect and self-protection. The impression, however, persists that Tilak was anti-Muslim despite the historic role he played in 1916 in consummating the Lucknow Pact in which the Muslims were generously given more than their due share of seats in the legislative councils.

It would be worth our while, therefore, to review the series of articles Tilak wrote in the *Kesari* in 1893 in which he presented his views on the Hindu-Muslim tension. He bluntly stated that "if Government showed partiality to Hindus, Muslims would be enraged and *vice versa* and those enraged will tend to cause riots". Discussing the attitude of Muslims he said:

"The position taken by the Muslims does not stand to reason. To say that the Hindus should stop all kind of music at all times of the day before each and every mosque is an extraordinary demand and no reasonable person can give his consent to it. The right of stopping music before mosques has its origin in local customs to a great extent. We, therefore, appeal to our Muslim brethren to give up their sweeping demand of stopping even soft music. If Muslims cannot bear the music at the time of prayers in mosques, how do they offer their prayers in trains, ships and shops ?

"Apart from that, their scripture prescribes that a Muslim should offer prayers at sunrise, noon and sunset wherever he may happen to be. It follows, therefore, that it is wrong to say that music interferes with prayers or that music before mosques is irreligious or blasphemous. These wrong ideas must have been impressed on them by some self-seeking and mischievous agencies. It is easy to settle this question of music before mosques if Muslims adopt a reasonable attitude. It is no use feeling puffed up by Government's partiality or preferential treatment. When the time for a real trial comes, both Hindus and Muslims would be considered equally insignificant and relentlessly put down."

Tilak appealed to the Government to hold the balance even between the two communities and to settle their differences impartially:

"If a fanatic Hindu enters a Muslim *mohalla* and tries to rescue a cow from a butcher's shop, his excessive religious zeal must be considered punishable. Similarly, if a Muslim says that his prayer is disturbed if a procession of Hindu devotees passes by a mosque on Ganesh Chaturthi, to the accompaniment of music, he must be made to see that he is wrong. While preaching amity to Hindus and Muslims, Lord Harris (the Governor of Bombay) must address his officers also to hold the scales even between the subjects of Her Majesty and not to play one against the other."

If this wholesome advice had been followed by the Government, India would have been spared the fratricidal strife which dogged her for the next 54 years and culminated in Partition with its frightful aftermath. But the seeds of the "divide and rule" policy, which were to grow into a upas tree in the following decades, were already sown. That Tilak was acutely aware of this threat is evident from the numerous references to "the third party" in his speeches and writings and the realistic and liberal attitude he uniformly adopted in his political dealings with the Muslims. C. R. Das records an interesting anecdote which reveals Tilak's insight into the communal issue:

"In 1906, when the Congress was held in Calcutta, the Lŏkamanya and other Maharashtrian friends were my guests. One day during his visit, a gentleman from Lucknow came to see him. I was present. This gentleman was a moderate in politics and began to speak somewhat angrily. He accused Lokamanya of creating dissensions in the Congress camp and said: 'Do you know what the Mahomedans are doing? They are combining against the Hindus and trying to start a pan-Islamic movement.' Lokamanya's eyes glistened. He asked: 'Are you sure?' 'Sure? I am as sure as I am here talking to you. I have seen some of their letters. Whilst you are dividing the Hindus, the Mahomedans are uniting to crush us.' To my surprise, Lokamanya said with a smile, which it is impossible for me to describe: 'Then is our deliverance at hand? Don't you see that the moment the Mahomedans combine, the Government will be at them? The moment the Government is at them, that very moment they will unite with us."

To revert to the Shivaji festival, the first celebration at Raigad on April 15, 1896, proved a resounding success. The festival was also held in other places in Maharashtra and even in distant Calcutta, where the Bengalis enthusiastically observed it for some years. It also gave an impetus to a critical study of the life and times of Shivaji. The credit of rehabilitating the great Maratha King as a national hero goes, after Ranade, to Tilak. But the festival was to involve him the very next year (1897) in a prosecution for sedition. A speech which he delivered on the slaying of Afzal Khan by Shivaji and which was later reproduced in the *Kesari* was alleged to have a direct bearing on the contemporary political situation and to give incitement to violence. In honouring the memory of a great national figure, Tilak was himself becoming one.

CHAPTER VII

FAMINE AND PLAGUE

HARDLY were the memories of the terrible famine of the 'seventies erased when another calamity befell the people of Maharashtra in 1896. The Indian people had become all too familiar with famines during the British regime, the last visitation—the greatest suffered by Bengal—coming barely five years before the British quitted India. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century alone eighteen famines occurred taking a toll of 19 million lives.

Familiarity, however, does not increase the capacity of the afflicted people to suffer the pangs of hunger. And every new famine posed the same threats of starvation, destitution and, sometimes, of violence to which people were driven in despair. The authorities were usually unwilling to admit the onset of famine and, even when they did, they tried to minimise its extent so that land revenue collections would not suffer. Admission of famine moreover reflected on the efficiency of the administration.

True to their traditions, the authorities discounted the first rumblings of famine in 1896. People were asked to place their hopes in the winter rains, and the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India assured the British public that there was no cause for anxiety and that a Famine Fund would not be necessary. Instead of provision of relief, revenue collections continued as usual and the forest laws were strictly enforced. The Famine Relief Code, which was enacted after the 1876 famine, provided that in areas where the crop was less than five annas in the rupee, the land revenue should either be suspended altogether or proportionately remitted. Even the implementation of this Code was deferred on some ground or other. And with the typical insensitiveness of alien rule, just at this very time the Viceroy began a tour of Indian States with its display of extravagant pomp and pageantry against the grim background of the famine.

Tilak lost no time in ventilating the grievances of the peasantry, acquainting it with its rights under the Famine Relief Code, organising relief and shaking officialdom out of its lethargy and inertia. He raised a band of zealous workers under the banner of the Sarvajanik Sabha and sent them to the famine-stricken areas to collect accurate statistics of the scarcity and to instruct the afflicted people on the avenues open to them for the alleviation of distress. The columns of the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta* were thrown open to reports of the famine, exactions and injustices committed upon the people and information about the Famine Relief Code. The Code was translated into Marathi, and thousands of copies were freely distributed in the affected areas.

Nothing like this campaign was seen in India before. For the first time a leader had sallied forth to educate the peasantry, to mobilise it and to prepare it to fight natural calamity and official injustice. Though the struggle launched by Tilak riled and angered the authorities, it was strictly constitutional. All he asked for was that the provisions for famine relief, which were already on the statute book, should be expeditiously acted upon. He urged the people boldly to seek redress .

"When the Queen desires that none should die, when the Governor declares that all should live and when the Secretary of State is prepared to incur debt if necessary, will you kill yourself by timidity and starvation ? If you have money to pay Government dues. pay them by all means. But if you have not, will you sell your things away only to avoid the supposed wrath of subordinate Government officials ? Can you not be bold even in the face of death ? We can stand any number of famines, but what shall we do with sheepish people? Had such a famine broken out in England and had the Prime Minister been as apathetic as our Viceroy, his Government would have tumbled down in no time."

These words were not lost on the officials even though they did not immediately move the people into a realisation of their strength. The former were provoked to give pin-pricks to the agents of the Sarvajanik Sabha, who were engaged in famine relief activities. They were not allowed to hold public meetings or even to move freely in the rural areas. The famine relief literature they sought to distribute among the ryots was destroyed. Dire threats were held out to those who were asking the people not to pay land revenue if they were unable to do so. And even prosecutions were launched against the more active workers.

Despite these harassments and attempts to stifle public agitation Tilak and his band of workers carried on their propaganda. Mammoth meetings were held "even under the range of police guns" as Tilak picturesquely described them. When he learnt that some of his fellow-workers were arrested, he rushed back from Calcutta, where he had gone for the Congress session and declared : "The present rule is a rule of the law. If my colleagues are prosecuted for explaining to the people the meaning of Government law, there is all the more reason why I should also be prosecuted because I do the same thing on a much wider scale."

Tilak was present at Pen when the trial of some famine relief workers, including Professor Paranjpye, was held. What took place there is best told in the words of R. N. Mandlik, an eye-witness :

"The huge meetings of nearly ten thousand people each will never be forgotten by the people of Pen. Before the commencement of the case against Prof. Paranjpye thousands of people gathered around the tent of the Collector who was hearing it. They started shouting slogans and cried 'Victory to Tilak'. The police failed to restrain the people or to clear them away. The Collector, therefore, requested

Tilak to go out and speak to the people and see if they could be pacified. Tilak succeeded in doing this. The case was over in five minutes. Prof. Paranjpye was acquitted and the other cases were postponed. The Collector then invited Tilak for an interview. I remember his saying: 'I have never seen either in India or England such a crowd of illiterate farmers gathered for a case of this nature. I was reminded of the Seven Bishops' case when I saw such crowds. It is a testimony to your popularity.' "

Agitation soon forced the Government to implement the Famine Relief Code. A Famine Fund was also established in Britain. Tilak's pleas to help the weavers of Ahmednagar and Sholapur, however, evoked no favourable response from the Government, despite their being entitled to relief under the Code. It also found a plausible excuse to withdraw the recognition of the Sarvajanik Sabha. This drew a fitting retort from the *Mahratta:*

"The Government may or may not favourably consider any petition sent to it, but it does not preclude anyone from addressing the Government on questions of public policy."

Tilak's famine relief work was doubly useful. In seeking economic redress he also carried political awakening to the grassroots of the nation. He knew that

A bold peasantry, their country's pride
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

In ameliorating its lot it is the strength of the nation that is husbanded. Nor can a nation progress when 85 per cent of its population is steeped in poverty and ignorance. It could be said, therefore, that Tilak's mission gathered momentum through his famine relief campaign in Maharashtra in 1896. Twenty-one years later Gandhi also made his debut into India's political struggle through his campaigns in Champaran and Kheda.

The importance of the peasantry in the national life was graphically described by Tilak in the *Kesari:*

"For the last twelve years we have been shouting hoarse, desiring that Government should hear us. But our shouting has no more affected Government than the sound of a gnat. Our rulers disbelieve our statements or profess to do so. Let us now try to force our grievances into their ears by strong constitutional means. We must give the best possible education to the ignorant villagers. We must meet them on terms of equality, teach them their rights and show them how to fight constitutionally.

"Then only will the Government realise that to despise the Congress is to despise the Indian nation. Then only will the efforts of the Congress leaders be crowned with success. Such work will require a large body of able and single-minded workers to whom politics would not mean some holiday recreation but an everyday duty to be performed with the strictest regularity and utmost sincerity."

Even while Tilak was in the midst of famine relief work, he had to devote his attention to the havoc wrought in Poona first by the outbreak of bubonic plague in 1897 and next by the efforts of the Government to control it. It would be difficult to imagine now the fright caused by a strange and fearful epidemic for which no remedy was available then. It would be even more difficult to gauge the depth of fear and indignation caused by the inhuman methods adopted by the Government to check it. Indeed, the anti-plague measures created greater terror in the public mind than the epidemic itself.

The scourge spread with the rapidity of wildfire first in Bombay and then in Poona. Its mortality was so high in Bombay that queues had to be formed at the cremation grounds and burial places. People fled away in panic from their homes and thus spread the epidemic. Even officials deserted their posts of duty and sought immunity elsewhere. It took some months for the seriousness of the situation to dawn upon the authorities, and it was only on February 4, 1897, that the Epidemic Diseases Act was passed.

It gave sweeping and drastic powers to the authorities to detain steamer passengers and cargo, to examine railway passengers and to remove those affected to hospitals. Any house could be searched and any person compulsorily segregated without notice. It was the execution of the last two measures, which was entrusted to British soldiers, that caused the greatest distress and anger in Poona. Suspected patients were summarily taken to hospitals and their relations to segregation camps. Houses were forcibly entered and defiled; valuable property was destroyed; and bonfires were made of furniture, clothes and bedding under the guise of disinfection. The Tommies seem to have taken it all as great fun.

In the beginning Tilak adopted an attitude of understanding co-operation with the authorities. He assured the people that strict instructions were given to plague officers not to harass women, pollute places of worship or hurt the religious sentiments of the people. He asked volunteers to accompany the search parties so as to avoid untoward incidents. But as the severity and stupidity of the anti-plague operations increased under Rand, a civilian who was appointed chairman of the Plague Committee, Tilak's tone changed. He observed :

"Although from a scientific point of view segregation is of great use, still the adverse notions of the community about hospitals, the usual way in which the rulers conduct themselves towards the ruled and diverse other reasons have rendered it almost impossible to bring segregation into practice. To what extent the impression that a hospital means a place for killing persons has taken deep root in the community will be easily seen from the fanciful rumours in connection with this which one often hears in Poona and Bombay. This terror about the hospitals has been aggravated by the acts of some of the unsorupulous policemen."

In order to restore public confidence Tilak established a private hospital and opened a fund for relief. Unlike many other prominent people who left Poona in panic, he remained in the city actively helping the needy and the distressed. He criticised the Government for the barbarous methods it was following and also chided the public leaders for their apathy and inactivity :

"It is true that Her Majesty the Queen, the Secretary of State and his Council should not have issued an order for needlessly practising *zulum* on the people of India without any special advantage to be gained and that the Bombay Government should not have entrusted the execution of this order to a suspicious, sullen and tyrannical officer like Rand. For this one cannot sufficiently blame the Home Government as well as the Bombay Governor.

"But in my opinion it is the duty of our leaders to find out some method for the protection of our people when it had once been settled that the Government is to practise *zulum* and when we are convinced that no one up to the supreme authority would afford redress for this *zulum*. What answer are we to give if anyone asks us the question whether our leaders tried to do anything in suppressing the fire which has at present spread in the city beyond remaining out of it and clamouring from there? Directly the Plague Act was passed, we should have observed in what direction the wind was blowing and should have taken steps for our protection. But the leaders betook themselves to flight."

The autocratic and wayward nature of Rand's administration continued even after it was officially notified that the plague had subsided and that inspection of houses would be discontinued. The epidemic had spent its fury, but cases of plague were still occurring. Despite this, an order was served on Tilak to close his hospital! It was only after an appeal was made to the higher authorities that the absurd order was rescinded.

An echo of the happenings in Poona was heard even in London. Gokhale, who had witnessed the earlier anti-plague measures, had gone to London to give evidence before the Welby Commission. Many of his friends and acquaintances in Poona reported to him instances of "atrocious outrages" perpetrated by British soldiers and begged him to move in the matter. Gokhale accordingly sent a letter to *The Manchester Guardian* in which he mentioned some of the excesses committed on the citizens of Poona :

"In defiance of the rules of the Plague Committee, the British soldiers entered kitchens and places of worship contaminating food and spitting upon idols or breaking them and throwing them into the streets... But that was not the worst. Women were dragged into the streets and stripped for inspection under the pretext that there was not enough light in the houses. My correspondents, whose words I can trust absolutely, report the violation of two women, one of whom is reported to have committed suicide rather than survive her shame."

The Secretary of State for India indignantly dismissed these charges as "a malevolent invention", and Sir Muncherji Bhownagree, M.P., who had attained notoriety as an enemy of Indian nationalism, called Gokhale "a despicable perjurer". Gokhale found it impossible to substantiate the charges, and even those in whose word he had reposed absolute trust let him down very badly. There was no alternative left to him on his return to India but to offer an apology to all those whom he had unwittingly wronged. While Gokhale no doubt took the only course open to a gentleman, the abject and sweeping nature of the apology pained even some of his own friends and admirers. The Natu brothers, who were supposed to be the chief informants of Gokhale, were detained without trial for two years under an obsolete regulation.

Meanwhile the plague atrocities had a terrible sequel in the murder of Rand and Lt. Ayerst as they were returning from a dinner at the Government House, Poona, in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee (June 22, 1897). Although Rand had made himself thoroughly obnoxious, nobody could have imagined that such vengeance would be wreaked upon him. While the crime shocked the public, it made the Government virtually lose its head. Even so loyal an Indian as Sir Cowasji Jehangir was prevented from attending Rand's funeral. Punitive police were promptly imposed on Poona. A prize of Rs. 20,000 was announced for the apprehension of the murderer, and Dámodar Chaphekar was arrested within a few months, having been betrayed by an accomplice, and hanged.

Tilak, who was present at the Jubilee function, was shocked as much by the murder as by its aftermath. He wrote : "It is extremely foolish to ignore all the good work done by individuals and the good sense and patience of a community as a whole simply because a fanatic took into his head to perpetrate a horrible deed which we all of us equally deplore." He was especially indignant over the attempts made by Anglo-Indian journals to indict the entire Brahmin community for complicity in the crime and even to suggest that it was hatching a plot to overthrow the British Government. British newspapers also joined the Anglo-Indian cry against the Poona Brahmins as the following comment of the *Daily Mail* shows :

"There is nothing fanatic about the Poona murder. Poona is the centre of much of the sedition and mutiny hatching in the whole country. The Poona Brahmin is notorious throughout the whole of India, and the educated among them particularly so. By their newspapers, by their secret messengers and signs they are endeavouring to stir up a revolt against the British power."

The Government's attitude was reflected in the threats given by the Collector of Poona to a meeting of prominent citizens as if they were responsible for the crime. "If disloyalty and sedition, conspiracy and assassination go unchecked amongst you," he warned the meeting, "I am here solemnly to warn you that what you prove yourself unable to check, Government will inevitably adopt stern measures to check for you." The game of baiting the Brahmins went on and attempts were made even to implicate Tilak personally in the murder. Questions were asked in Parliament by Bhownagree whether the Government did not consider the articles and speeches of Tilak seditious. The significant reply to this was that it was a matter of law on which the Bombay Government had not arrived at a final conclusion.

A stinging reply was given to those innuendoes and threats by Tilak in two leading articles in the *Kesari*. Their very headings were eloquent : "Has the Government lost its head ?" and "To rule is not to wreak vengeance". When his friends protested at such blunt speaking in the prevailing atmosphere of suspicion and panic, Tilak told them . "I write strong language, I admit. But my heart is full of indignation at the injustice which is being perpetrated by the officials. The words which come out are the natural outburst of the feelings inside me. I am, however, convinced that I am within the limits of the law in criticising the Government's measures, however strong may be the language I use."

How mistaken Tilak was to prove himself will be seen in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

GUILTY OF SEDITION

RAND and Ayerst were murdered in Poona on June 22, 1897. Tilak was arrested in Bombay on July 27. There was apparently no connection between these two events, the prosecution on a charge of sedition being based on a poem and an article on Shivaji published in the *Kesari*. However, it was the panic among officials and the vilification by Anglo-Indian journals following the murders which really provoked the Government to arrest Tilak. *The Times of India* led the pack by publishing extracts from Tilak's writings, garbled and distorted from their context. Referring to his appeal to Poona leaders to realise "the futility of mere clamour against the high-handedness of the plague authorities", it wrote:

"Though we do not offer any suggestions as to the view that the jury might take of the Hon. Mr. Tilak's discourse on 'the futility of mere clamour' against Mr. Rand and his assistants, still someone with a pistol in his hand seems to have been in hearty agreement with the Hon. Member's distrust in the efficacy of mere clamour."

As this campaign of calumny reached a crescendo, Tilak wrote a letter of protest to *The Times of India*:

"The shocking tragedy at Poona may have obscured your judgment. But you have entirely misrepresented my conduct as both a journalist and a private gentleman during the time the plague operations were in force in Poona... I think I am entitled to say that you are doing me sheer injustice by representing that either myself or my paper did anything to excite disaffection among the people... Unlike you, I could not shut up my eyes to complaints and grievances which, from personal knowledge, I was convinced were real and well-founded. Anglo-Indian journalists like yourself can be hardly induced to take the right view of the question. You have, it seems, chosen to follow in the footsteps of the London *Times* in making reckless charges at such a time against individuals, communities and institutions."

The reference was to the Irish patriot, Parnell, who was then being hounded by the British Press and some members of Parliament for his alleged complicity in the Phoenix Park murders. Tilak decided to take legal steps against the offending papers and it was for that purpose that he went to Bombay on July 27—only to get himself arrested that night under Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code. Evidently, the C.I.D.'s efforts to find any connection between Tilak and the murder of Rand had drawn a blank and hence the resort to the sedition section.

Political agitation was in its infancy in 1897, and prosecution for sedition was virtually unknown. That very word gave a fright to many and not a few of Tilak's friends and acquaintances ostentatiously dissociated themselves from him after his arrest. The question of finance for fighting the case also presented considerable difficulty in view of his slender pecuniary resources. But the people at large rallied to his support and a defence fund was spontaneously started. Bengal gave the lead in raising the fund, which soon topped the Rs. 50,000 mark, and it also sent two leading barristers to defend Tilak in the Bombay High Court.

Tilak was granted bail on August 4 by Justice Badruddin Tyabji after three earlier attempts to secure it had failed. The case came up for hearing before the sessions court presided over by Justice Strachey on September 8. A jury of six Europeans and three Indians was empanelled, and in a tense atmosphere the Advocate-General opened the case for the prosecution. The key words of Section 124-A were "exciting feelings of disaffection", and it was on the meaning and connotation of the word "disaffection" that the whole case hinged.

The Advocate-General's contention was that Tilak really intended to excite disaffection towards the British Government and to seek to overthrow it through the articles which formed the subject-matter of the charge. The Defence Counsel, on the other hand, stressed :

"But for the murder of Rand, Tilak would not have been hauled up in court. Most of the subject-matter of Tilak's alleged offence is in the form of verses. A metrical composition does not lend itself to a strictly legal, precise and scientific analysis. The Shivaji festival is very much like the festival of Robert Bruce and William Wallace in Scotland. When people are fired with enthusiasm for such national festivities they do use some extravagant, hyperbolic and metaphorical language. The controversy about Afzal Khan's murder was in the Press long before Rand's murder and by no stretch of imagination could the latter be related to the former. If the Government seriously believed Tilak guilty of the abetment of murder, it ought to have openly accused him of it. The very fact that he has not been so charged but prosecuted under Section 124-A shows the weakness of Government case."

The first interpretation of Section 124-A, which was included in the Indian Penal Code in 1870, was given in 1891 by Sir Comer Petheram, Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, in the *Bangabasi* case. Apparently following it, Justice Strachey held that disaffection meant simply the absence of affection. It included hatred, enmity, dislike, hostility, contempt and every form of ill-will towards the Government and not simply disapprobation as was suggested by the Defence Counsel. The Judge proceeded . .

"Disaffection means everything which indicates hostility to the Government. That is what the law means by the disaffection which a man must not excite or attempt to excite, he must not make or try to make others feel enmity of any kind towards the Government; if a man excites or attempts to excite feelings of disaffection, great or small. he is guilty under the Section. In the next place, it is absolutely immaterial whether any feelings of disaffection have been excited or not by the publication in question."

Justice Strachey's charge to the jury concluded on the fifth day of the hearing (September 14), and the jury returned a majority verdict of six for guilty. The judge accepted it and sentenced Tilak to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment.

The news was received with shock and grief all over the country which was following the trial with anxious interest. When on the last day it was known that judgment would be pronounced that evening huge crowds thronged the newspaper and telegraph offices. Public reaction to Tilak's conviction varied all the way from anguish to anger, only Anglo-Indian and official circles greeting the news with glee. A Madras paper wrote that it would be impossible to obliterate the memory of that evening and that it could not be said that the event was conducive to the strengthening of the bonds between the native and the Anglo-Indian communities in the country.

Three months later from the rostrum of the National Congress at Amraoti Surendranath Banerjea declared : "A nation is in tears. For Mr. Tilak my heart is full of sympathy and my feelings go forth to him in his prison home. Speaking for the Indian Press, I have no hesitation in saying that we believe Mr. Tilak to be innocent of the charges brought against him." Almost simultaneously in distant Britain Dadabhai Naoroji observed : "Gagging the Press is simply suicidal. There never was a greater mistake than to prosecute Mr. Tilak. This was a new departure from the principles on which the British Government was conducted."

Even a British paper like the *Daily Chronicle* was constrained to note : "Prove real sedition—above all, conclusively connect it with crime—and we should all favour sharp, stern punishment. But when it comes to overhauling poems and constructing elaborate innuendoes from eulogies of picturesque and popular bandits one feels that the Government are on a perilous path. We feel confident that Justice Strachey's interpretation of the law would not be tolerated in England and, if not speedily overruled, may produce grave mischief in India."

Tilak's conviction made him a national figure overnight. It did something more. It removed the terror from sedition. It ended the meek subservience to foreign domination. It put a finis to arm-chair politics and easy-going leadership. It ushered in a new age of nationalism. Service of the country came to be associated with suffering and sacrifice. Patriotism no longer lay in oratorical flourishes but in the spirit of "dare and do".

Three days after his conviction Tilak made an application to the Bombay High Court for leave to appeal to the Privy Council. The Full Bench which heard the application rejected it on the ground that there was no miscarriage to justify an appeal. But it held that Justice Strachey erred in his interpretation of "disaffection" as mere absence of affection. This virtually amounted to a misdirection to the jury, which should have been a sufficient ground for appeal. A special appeal, subsequently made to the Privy Council in London, also proved unsuccessful and deserves mention only because H. H. Asquith, who later became Prime Minister of Britain, appeared for Tilak. The state of uncertainty created by Justice Strachey's judgment was removed only when Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code was amended the following year explicitly to include disloyalty and all feelings of enmity in the term "disaffection".

Like a criminal convict, Tilak had to undergo the rigorous discipline of the jail. The category of political prisoners was not even heard of then, and a man guilty of sedition was subjected to even harsher treatment than that given to ordinary prisoners. The thousands of "politicals" who crowded the jails during the non-co-operation movement of the 'twenties and 'thirties can scarcely imagine the hardships suffered by Tilak. He was given the exacting work of carding coconut fibre for mats. He cheerfully did this and the other chores, but he could hardly swallow the coarse jail food. His weight came down alarmingly from 135 to 105 lb. in four months.

Those who were allowed to visit Tilak wondered whether he would survive his ordeal. Mr. S. S. Setlur, one of Tilak's legal advisers, took up the matter with the Howard Association of London, which laboured for the betterment of prisons. Although the first representation of its secretary was treated in typical bureaucratic fashion, his later warnings of the consequences that would follow Tilak's death in jail had some effect.

An outbreak of plague in Bombay impelled the Bombay Government to transfer Tilak to the Yeravda jail in Poona. During his stay in the Bombay jail Tilak subjected himself to anti-plague inoculation, despite its being in an experimental stage, so as to set an example to other prisoners. In Poona he was given better treatment and more agreeable food, including milk, thanks to the representation of the Howard Association. He was also allowed books. He interested himself in the work of dyeing yarn assigned to him. A most pleasant surprise was the receipt of a complimentary copy of the *Rigveda* from Prof. Max Müller who had formed a high opinion of Tilak's scholarship from his *Orion.*

At Yeravda Tilak continued the study of his favourite subject—the antiquity of the Vedas and the Aryan civilisation—which formed the basis of his book *The Arctic Home in the Vedas,* published five years later. After his release Tilak told a friend how happy he became when he could explain to himself one night the correct meaning of a certain Vedic hymn which was vital to his research. The friend naturally asked : "How could there be any happiness in prison ?" Tilak's reply was : "You won't understand it unless you go there."

At the request of Damodar Chaphekar, who was awaiting execution in the Yeravda jail for the murder of Rand, Tilak was allowed to prepare a petition of mercy for him, which was rejected. Whether the Government had any Machiavellian motive in permitting such contact between the two is a matter of conjecture, but it was totally unsuccessful in discovering any links between them. Tilak lent his copy of the *Gita* to Chaphekar, who carried it to the gallows, and arranged for his cremation according to Hindu rites.

Meanwhile, a campaign was set afoot both in India and Britain for the release of Tilak. Prof Max Müller's scholarly interest in him strengthened the campaign and a memorial was sent to the Queen appealing for clemency on seven well-reasoned grounds. The memorialists, among whom were Sir William Hunter, Sir Richard Garth, Dadabhai Naoroji, R. C. Dutt and Prof. Max Muller, pleaded that the release of Tilak would produce a beneficial effect on the public mind.

The Government could not resist the pressure, but neither could it reconcile itself to an unconditional release of Tilak. It professed willingness to release him if he would agree to two conditions : not to accept the receptions that might be arranged in his honour after his release and "not to do anything by act, speech or writing to excite disaffection against the Government". Tilak readily accepted the first condition because he never sought such demonstrations, but the second he rejected outright because it would have meant an end to his political life.

After prolonged negotiations, Tilak proposed, in lieu of the second condition, that should he be convicted again on a charge of sedition, the unexpired term of six months might be added to his sentence. Tilak's refusal to give a humiliating undertaking was characteristic. As a matter of fact, even before the trial, some of his friends including Motilal Ghosh, the editor of *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta, had urged him to apologise to the Government and thus save himself from the almost certain imprisonment. Tilak replied :

"The other side expects me to do what amounts to pleading guilty. I am not prepared to do so. My position among the people depends entirely on my character; and if I am cowed by the prosecution, I think living in Maharashtra is as good as living in the Andamans. On the merits of the case I am afraid only of a jury not conversant with Marathi, and not of justice. If you all advise it, I am prepared to go only so far as to say : 'I don't think the articles are seditious, but if the advisers of the Government think otherwise, I am sorry for it.' But this will not satisfy the Government. Their object is to humiliate the Poona leaders, but they will not find in me a *kutcha* reed as they did in Prof. Gokhale. Then you must remember that beyond a certain stage we are all servants of the people. You will be betraying and disappointing them if you show a lamentable want of courage at a critical time."

There was nothing dishonourable to Tilak's personal and public life in the proposed condition which the Government of Bombay was persuaded to accept. Tilak became a free man at 9 p.m. on September 6, 1898, but he was a wreck of his former self. In the words of his nephew, he returned home "a skeleton—eyes sunk deep, cheeks pallid and pinched, and gait unsteady".

The news of his premature release was received with jubiliation. Poona was astir and hundreds of people came to his house within an hour of his return. The next day their number rose to thousands. Telegrams and letters of felicitation poured in from all parts of the country. R. C. Dutt, who was in England then, wrote : "I cannot describe in words what feelings rise in my heart when I remember the hardships you have borne. The courage and power of suffering you have so far shown are worthy of admiration. I do not doubt that the effect of your example will be permanent. Your endeavours will never go in vain.

They are bound to bear fruit. Your hardships will lead the nation to victory."

Victory was yet far away. The immediate need was to recoup his shattered health and for that Tilak went with his family to Sinhgad, his favourite hill resort.

CHAPTER IX

TAI MAHARAJ CASE

CHANCES rule men, said Herodotus, not men chances. Such a chance event which came about when Tilak paid a visit to Poona during his release on bail was verily to rule his life for the next seven years and, even afterwards, to remain a constant source of worry till the end of his days. The bail was itself a chance, as it was earlier refused by three judges on three occasions. That Tilak should go to Poona to put his affairs in order and to execute a will was another chance. But it was another man's will, in which he got himself involved by sheer chance, that was to subject Tilak to a prolonged ordeal of civil litigation and criminal prosecution in which the whim of a widow was made the instrument of the Government's vindictiveness.

Baba Maharaj, who was a first-class Sardar of the Deccan, lay on his death-bed following an attack of cholera when Tilak visited him on August 7, 1897. At the pressing last request of his friend, he agreed to be one of the trustees of his estate along with Khaparde, Kumbhojkar and Nagpurkar. Baba Maharaj's instructions in the will were clear :

"My wife is expecting a baby. If she gives birth to a daughter, or if a son is born but lives only a short time, then for the purpose of continuing the name of my family, with the advice of the trustees, a boy shall be placed, as often as may be necessary for adopting on the lap of my wife in accordance with the *shastras*, and the trustees shall on behalf of that son carry on the management of my movable and immovable estate until he attains his majority."

Baba Maharaj's widow, Sakwarbai (generally known as Tai Maharaj), was barely fifteen. Five months after her husband's death she gave birth to a son, who died soon after. Taking advantage of the absence of Tilak in jail and of the other two trustees, who lived out of Poona, the avaricious Nagpurkar, who was a clerk of the estate, began to work upon the mind of Tai Maharaj with a view to influencing her to adopt his own son. The estate affairs were conducted smoothly during the first three years. The other trustees took the probate of the will even while Tilak was in jail. It was found that the estate was heavily encumbered with debts and that the strictest economy would be necessary to redeem the mortgages. Tilak had even to pledge his own property to satisfy the more clamant creditors. The trustees' insistence on economy irked Tai Maharaj and gave a handle to Nagpurkar to win her confidence. She was made to feel that she was the equitable owner of the property and, as such, to regard the control of the trustees and her possible divestment by an adopted son as a grievance.

Tai Maharaj, however, did not openly oppose the search of the trustees for a suitable boy in the various branches of the family. Their choice fell on the Babre branch of the family in Hyderabad State. Tai Maharaj accompanied Tilak and Khaparde to Aurangabad, where the final selection was to be made from five boys. They were asked to stay with the widow and the trustees for some days. After a close scrutiny and consultation with astrologers, Jagannath was selected. Tai Maharaj formally asked his father to give him in adoption to which he agreed. The deeds of adoption were drawn on June 27, 1901. Early next day friends gathered to witness the religious ceremony in which Tai Maharaj adopted Jagannath on her lap, as provided in the *shastras*. The documents were executed and, as the Privy Council held fifteen years later, they were conclusive evidence of "the actual adoption in fact".

The subsequent festivities were postponed so as to take place in Poona in keeping with the status of the family.

No sooner did Tai Maharaj return to Poona, however, than she was prevailed upon to repudiate the adoption of Jagannath as done under duress. Her unscrupulous advisers led by Nagpurkar were actuated more by their own greed than by the good of Tai Maharaj. They induced her to see the District Magistrate, H. F. Aston, who was also the Agent to the Deccan Sardars, to seek protection against the high-handedness of Tilak and the other two trustees.

The young widow's tale of woe delivered in a flood of tears seems to have aroused the chivalry of Aston. But a more dominating motive in the action he took against Tilak was to vent his spleen on him as an arch-agitator. He had already earned notoriety by sentencing an obscure editor of Satara to transportation for life. It was therefore no surprise that he should seize an opportunity to implicate Tilak to gain favour of the Government. Not for the first time in the history of British rule in India had a judge made himself a willing tool of the executive.

With the active encouragement of Aston, Tai Maharaj applied on July 29, 1901, for revocation of the probate granted to the trustees on the ground that it had become void and inoperative owing to her having given birth to a son. Instead of confining himself to this single issue, however, Aston went out of his way to take cognisance of the adoption and of the part played by Tilak in it. He submitted Tilak to a vexatious cross-examination for fourteen days and made a note on the record that he was "a fencing, prevaricating, quibbling witness; demeanour distinctly untruthful".

Judgment was delivered on April 4, 1902, which in addition to revoking the probate, held the Aurangabad adoption disproved and committed Tilak to the City Magistrate to be dealt with according to law under Section 476 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Seven charges were formulated against him as follows: (1) Tilak had made false complaints of breach of trust against Nagpurkar. (2) He had fabricated false evidence for use by making alterations and interpolations in the accounts of the Aurangabad trip. (3) Forgery in connection with the above. (4) Tilak had corruptly used or attempted to use as genuine evidence known to be false. (5) He had corruptly used as genuine the adoption deed. (6) Tilak had fraudulently used as genuine the adoption deed containing his interpolation over Tai Maharaj's signature. And (7) he had given false evidence intentionally.

This omnibus commitment was received with astonishment bordering on incredulity. Here was a man standing on a high pedestal denounced as an unscrupulous character committing perjury against a young and defenceless widow. For Tilak it must have been the darkest hour of his life—far darker than when he was convicted of sedition five years earlier. But if his customary equanimity was ruffled, it was only for a moment. He had complete faith in the purity of his motives and the justness of his cause. During the long-drawn proceedings, he deliberately refused to put in even a scrap of paper as evidence against what were utterly irrelevant charges.

Meanwhile, on August 19, 1901, at the instigation of the unscrupulous persons who surrounded her and with the connivance of Aston, Tai Maharaj had adopted Bala Maharaj of the Kolhapur branch as her son in the presence of the Maharaja of Kolhapur. Earlier attempts to hold the ceremony in her own house in Poona were foiled by the vigilance and firmness of Tilak. This introduced another complication and Tilak filed a suit in the Civil Court of Poona to get the second adoption declared invalid and that of Jagannath Maharaj confirmed.

Tilak appealed to the Bombay High Court against Aston's judgment. The High Court reversed the decision on the probate, but declined to quash the criminal proceedings instituted against Tilak on the ground that it could not move in the matter at that stage. Two police officers were appointed by the Government to collect evidence against Tilak. Their report, which held dim prospects of the prosecution succeeding, was dismissed as prejudiced and a special magistrate was appointed to try Tilak. If any doubt existed regarding Tilak's real adversary it was removed by this action and the sanction of Rs. 30,000 for the expenses of the prosecution. Not merely had the Government made Tai Maharaj its tool but it had also "adopted" the case against Tilak. Political vendetta could go no further.

The special magistrate appointed to try Tilak on the seven criminal charges drawn up by Aston went through what could be called only the motions of a trial. He convicted him on two counts and sentenced him to eighteen months' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1,000. He was in such indecent haste to send Tilak to jail that he did not even allow him sufficient time to lodge an appeal that day. While being removed to jail, Tilak was handcuffed like a common felon, which created indignation throughout the country. In a revisional application the Sessions Court upheld the conviction, only reducing the sentence to six months. The High Court, however, released him on bail, quashed the conviction and exonerated him of all charges. Referring to a certain aspect of the trial in the Sessions Court, the High Court held it "antagonistic to the first principles of criminal jurisprudence".

Tilak stood vindicated at last, but he had to pass through a fiery ordeal in the four years since Tai Maharaj (who had meanwhile died) had gained the willing ear of Aston. Tilak's character emerged more brilliant like gold after being tested by fire. "This case consumed all my mental and physical powers for years", said Tilak. "All is well that ends well. All the same, we must look upon laughter of happiness and tears of misery as the play of destiny and attend to our duties with complete equanimity of mind."

The civil suit filed in September 1901 for the confirmation of Jagannath Maharaj's adoption was still pending. For Tilak it proved to be a legal Odyssey from the First

Class Civil Court of Poona, which pronounced in his favour on July 31, 1906, to the Bombay High Court, which reversed the Poona Court's judgment in 1910 (when Tilak was a prisoner in Mandalay), to the final Privy Council verdict on March 26, 1915, which decided the issue of adoption entirely in Tilak's favour. Their Lordships had some caustic things to say about the admission of the depositions in the criminal cases in the civil suit by the Bombay High Court :

"There is a risk, by such procedure, of justice being perverted. A civil cause must be conducted in the ordinary way and judged by the evidence led therein. The depositions could not have been used to support the evidence of the plaintiff. There is no warrant for using them for the purpose of either contradicting or discounting the evidence. It was stated to their Lordships that the prosecution for perjury had in the end completely failed. Successful or not, the introduction of the criminal proceedings in this civil action was illegitimate."

In fact, the institution of the original action was itself worse than illegitimate. It was outrageous and immoral. The Government blundered into it by its blind hatred of Tilak and by the diabolical desire to ruin his political reputation by besmirching his personal character. Only Tilak's matchless courage and faith in Providence sustained him all through the twenty-three years of the Tai Maharaj case. For, strange as it may seem, even the Privy Council judgment was not allowed to ring down the curtain on it. The Bombay Government delayed the execution of its decree on one ground or another, and the Court of Wards handed the estate to Jagannath Maharaj only in February 1917.

There was still the objection raised by the Kolhapur State to be cleared. The State Government not only considered that the Privy Council judgment was not binding on it in so far as Jagannath Maharaj's properties situated in its territory were concerned but also claimed that the estate that he had inherited in British territory was originally its own *inam* and should be restored to Kolhapur. It continued to recognise Bala Maharaj as the adopted son of Baba Maharaj and, as such, the Kolhapur property was invested in him. The Bombay High Court dismissed the Kolhapur State's suit just ten days before Tilak's death.

It may be added as a foot-note that it was not until some years after Tilak's death that the hereditary title of Sardar was conferred on Jagannath Maharaj. The Tai Maharaj case, which dogged Tilak for nearly one-third of his life during which he was simultaneously undergoing the trials, and tribulations of political struggle, was a severe ordeal. Only fortitude and the philosophical calm of a *karmayogin* enabled him to go through it. The example of loyalty, uprightness and courage Tilak set in all the vicissitudes of the Tai Maharaj Case entitles him to the highest respect.

Before we resume the thread of Tilak's political activities, which were interrupted by his imprisonment for sedition, a few incidents that took place between 1898 and 1904 may be related. After his rest for two months at Sinhgad he proceeded to Madras for the Congress session but took no active part in it. From Madras he proceeded to Ceylon for a holiday. This and the visit to Burma at the end of the following year were the only pleasure trips ever undertaken by Tilak. He proved himself a close observer of the manners and customs of the Ceylonese and Burmese people, and what he saw confirmed his views that social reform and political progress did not necessarily go hand in hand. Although both Ceylon and Burma were socially far more advanced than India, they were politically in the same boat. In fact, their national awakening came much later. In a speech in Poona he said :

"All the reforms like absence of caste division, freedom of religion, education of women, late marriages, widow remarriage, and system of divorce on which some good people are in the habit of harping *ad nauseăm*, as constituting a condition precedent to the introduction of political reforms in India, had already been in actual practice in Burma. But there was not evident among the Burmese a feeling for their religion, their country or their industry to the degree expected of them. Therefore, we can conclude that there is no inherent connection between social reform and national regeneration."

A grim sequel to Chaphekar's execution for Rand's murder occurred in 1899. The Dravid brothers, who were suspected of having betrayed him, were called one night out of their home in Poona and shot dead. This recrudescence of terrorism gave fresh jitters to the Anglo-Indian Press. In October *The Times of India* published an item from the London *Globe* referring to "the campaign of murder which Tilak directed, if he was not its organiser". Tilak promptly sued and compelled *The Times of India* to give an unconditional apology. The *Globe* had to follow suit after some bravado of justifying its remarks.

Tilak signalised his return to active politics by a famous leading article in the *Kesari* on June 4, 1899. It had for its title the religious invocation *Punasch Hari Om,* whose literal translation "Back to our mission" fails to convey its rich implications. He made a passionate plea for unity : "We find that owing to the disorders of the plague and the angry attitude of the Government all our movements have come to a standstill. If we mean to revive them, our first duty is to close up our ranks. Should not the experience of the last two years make us wiser ? Both the political parties are agreed as to the rights we want to get from the rulers. If this is so, where is the room for Moderation and Extremism ? Already the Government has restricted our liberty of speech. It is suicidal, therefore, to emphasise our political differences. Let us not keep aloof from each other by creating false doubts and differences."

The Moderates were in no mood to listen to such appeals. Apart from their temperamental differences with Tilak, he had become something like a bugbear to them since his conviction for sedition. He was not even invited to a reception accorded by the Deccan Education Society to R. P. Paranjpye on his return as a Senior Wrangler from Cambridge. Moderate delegates raised a storm of opposition when Tilak moved at the Lucknow Congress (1899) a resolution condemning Lord Sandhurst's regime as the Governor of Bombay and the motion had to be withdrawn when the President (R. C. Dutt)) went to the length of threatening to vacate the chair if it was pressed to a vote.

The main objection to the resolution was that it pertained to a provincial subject. In May 1900, therefore, Tilak again raised it at the Bombay Provincial Conference at Satara. The Moderates led by the president of the conference, G. K. Parekh, still opposed it because they were afraid of the consequences of any censure of the Government. Parekh tried various stratagems to defer if not defeat the resolution and ultimately prevailed upon the delegates to patch up a compromise. Tilak deprecated this timidity and wrote in the *Kesari:* "Congresses and conferences are not meant for flatterers and such persons as raise memorials for each and every Governor, but for those who will not hesitate to voice public opinion in a fearless but temperate manner. Therefore, the attitude taken by the president of the Bombay Provincial Conference was wholly arbitrary and unconstitutional."

During 1901 Tilak contributed several articles to the *Kesari* on the problem of the peasantry following the official Bill amending the Land Revenue Code introduced in the Bombay Legislative Council. The Bill sought to restrict the peasants' capacity to mortgage or sell his land to the *sowcar* on the ground that unrestricted liberty to alienate their lands was reducing them to the position of mere yearly tenants. Opinion in the Council was sharply divided and when Pherozeshah Mehta's amendment that the consideration of the Bill be adjourned for assessing public opinion was rejected, all the elected members led by him and Gokhale walked out. This walk-out was the first of its kind in the Bombay Council and it created a sensation. Tilak strongly supported Mehta's opposition to the Bill, which was calculated to destroy the mutual relationship between the peasantry and the *sowcars,* who then fulfilled a vital function in rural economy.

Both at the Delhi Congress (1900) and at the Calcutta Congress Tilak received warm ovations. Gandhi writes of his presence in Calcutta : "Lokamanya was put up in the same block as I. I have a recollection that he came a day later. And as was natural, Lokamanya would never be without his *durbar.* Were I a painter, I could paint him as I saw him seated on his bed—so vivid is the whole scene in my memory. Of the numberless people that called on him, I can today recollect only one, Babu Motilal Ghosh. Their loud laughter and their talks about the wrong doings of the ruling race cannot be forgotten."

The size of the *Keṣari* was doubled in February 1902, an occasion which he utilised for reviewing its progress in the preceding 21 years during which its circulation had risen from 700 to 13,000. Its actual readership, however, was many times that figure because people were then afraid to subscribe openly to an anti-Government paper. Tilak reaffirmed the policy of his papers :

"So long as our desire is to teach people to be fearless in order to get strength to fight for their rights we have nothing to fear. The *Kesari* was born at a time when Lord Lytton had passed his Press Act. It was thought then that writing in the newspapers should be such as would not hurt the feelings of the rulers. That time has now gone. We consider it our duty to work for awakening the people, to teach them sincerity and the sense of unity. We write not for the rulers but in order that the readers might imbibe our spirit and understand our thoughts, our agonies and our indignation."

In January 1903, Tilak's eldest son, Vishwanath, died of plague. His typical response to condolences was : "When there is a general bonfire of the whole town, everyone must contribute his quota of fuel." Next morning, while he was dictating the leading article of the *Kesari,* he was informed that Bapu, his younger son, was running a fever. Any other person in his place would have been completely unnerved but Tilak, according to his amanuensis, remained absorbed in his work until he had revised the manuscript and sent it to the press.

The Arctic Home in the Vedas, which Tilak conceived during his term at the Yeravda jail, was published in 1903. The major portion of the book was written in the summer of 1902 at Sinhgad. Tilak used to dictate for hours on end except when he was seized by a new line of thought, when writing was stopped for long stretches. As H. W. Nevinson remarked, apart from its value to Vedic research, the book is significant "because it appeared in the midst of the author's diverse persecution, when money, reputation, influence and everything else were at stake, and few men would have had the courage to spare a thought either for sacred books or Arctic circles"

CHAPTER X

DYNAMIC POLICY

TILAK attended the Congress session at Bombay (December 1904) after a break of two years, caused by his preoccupation with the Tai Maharaj case, and received a warm ovation. He was in full agreement with Sir Henry Cotton, who presided over the session, and Wedderburn that the Congress should adopt a dynamic policy. The younger elements in the Congress were keen on it, but Pherozeshah Mehta, who dominated it, was averse to a change. He reacted adversely even to Dadabhai Naoroji's spirited performance at the International Socialist Congress at Amsterdam, which passed a resolution condemning British rule in India. He was allergic to the framing of a constitution for the Congress and even to the proposal that it should remain active throughout the year.

Gokhale's defence of boycott during his visit to Britain in 1905 riled Mehta and he showed his displeasure by not attending the next Congress at Banaras (December 1905) over which Gokhale presided. On their part, Tilak and the other Extremist leaders desired to harness the indignation over the Bengal partition to the national cause. They wanted to transform the Congress into a militant organisation. Tilak said :

"We have lost faith in the dilatory activities of the Congress. To us the holding of the Congress for three days in the year and the occasional sending of a deputation to England seem quite insufficient. Not that we have no faith in constitutional agitation. We do not want to overthrow the British Government. But political rights will have to be fought for. The Moderates think that these can be won by persuasion. We think that they can be got by strong pressure. Will the Congress exert itself to apply that pressure? That is the point and if such pressure is to be applied, the Congress leaders must do away with its present character and turn it into an organisation working continuously and energetically."

The Moderates were in no mood to fall in line with the Extremists though a refreshing change appeared to have come over Gokhale personally. In his presidential address at Banaras, he called the upheaval of popular feeling in Bengal a landmark in the history of national progress. He supported *swadeshi* and boycott and condemned Lord Curzon for the wrong he had perpetrated on Bengal. But Gokhale's personal predilections were not sufficient to wean the Moderates from their habitual ways of thinking. They gave a grudging support to the boycott resolution, but the differences between the two groups came to a head over the resolution of welcome to the Prince of Wales who was then in India. Whereas the Moderates were keen on this customary display of loyalty, Tilak and Lajpat Rai strongly opposed it as not being in keeping with the prevailing sentiment in the country. Eventually, at the personal request of Gokhale, a compromise was arrived at that when the resolution would be moved, the Tilak group should absent itself and it would not be declared as "passed unanimously".

The facade of Congress unity was maintained at Banaras, but the cracks and fissures could no longer be hidden from view. The Extremists, especially in Bengal, Bombay and the Punjab, were restive. They called upon their leaders to adopt a firm attitude towards the Moderates and end the inertia which had gripped the Congress. It was after the Banaras Congress that Tilak mooted the idea of passive resistance. The Moderates, on their part, were none too happy over the developments at Banaras where the Extremists gave them a tough fight on more than one issue. They must have also been considerably exercised by the forthright speech of the president, which made them feel that he had given up moderation. Gokhale's heart indeed seemed to be with the Extremists at Banaras though his head remained anchored in the Moderate camp.

During the next few months both groups were busy preparing for the resumption of the struggle for supremacy at the Calcutta Congress. But the trial of strength came long before it over the issue of its president. Pal and other Bengali leaders were keen that Tilak should preside over the session. Tilak himself was inclined towards Lajpat Rai. Both these names were anathema to the Moderates who were apprehensive as to what would happen at the Calcutta session, in view of the angry mood of Bengal. In their desperation they hit upon the idea of inviting the octogenarian Dadabhai Naoroji to preside over the Congress for the third time. They rightly believed that none would oppose the Grand Old Man and an invitation was accordingly sent to him even without the formal sanction of the Reception Committee.

Tilak must have laughed in his sleeves over this desperate stratagem of the Moderates. He knew that in Dadabhai they would catch a Tartar for, despite his age, he was a radical among radicals. Tilak wrote in the *Kesari* on the eve of the president-elect's arrival: "It is Dadabhai's considered conclusion that the British rule over India is a canker which is eating into the vitals of the country. Such being the case, it would be unwise to suppose that he would be opposed to the resolutions on *Swadeshi,* Boycott and National Education. We must also remember that Dadabhai is not an arm-chair politician who thinks of politics as a diversion for leisure hours. He has devoted his life to the service of the country, and he knows the value of the new spirit which has been sweeping the country lately."

The Calcutta Congress was the first session of the national organisation after its coming of age. Twenty years earlier Dadabhai had presided over the Congress for the first time in that very city. The twenty-second session was the largest political gathering witnessed in India up to that time. In addition to the 2,000 delegates, thousands of visitors attended it daily. And it made history by formulating the demand for self-government—Swaraj—from its platform. Dadabhai's voice was feeble, but there was nothing feeble about his declaration in the presidential address :

"Just as the administration of the United Kingdom in all its services, departments and details was in the hands of the people of that country, so should it be in India. As in the United Kingdom and the colonies, all the taxation and legislation and power of spending the taxes were in the hands of the representatives of the country, so should it be in India. The financial relations between England and India must be adjusted on a footing of equality. We do not ask for any favours. We want only justice. The whole matter could be compressed in one word—self-government or Swaraj."

The country was thrilled by this peroration. There was jubilation in the Extremist camp. If the Moderates were dismayed they put up a brave face on it. Anglo-Indian journals condemned the presidential address as a surrender to the Extremists. The *Englishman* twitted that "Dadabhai, who was called upon to quench the flames of hatred towards the British rule, had only used kerosene for that purpose". The London *Times* thundered : "We have won India by the sword, and it is well for the small and highly-educated classes, which are alone represented in the Congress, that the British sword stands between them and their native enemies. That is the fundamental fact in the whole situation which makes all claims for full self-government in India absurd."

Resolutions on boycott and *swadeshi* in the subjects committee provoked violent scenes of disagreement between the Moderates and the Extremists. Tilak scored a victory in gaining the emphatic declaration that "the boycott movement was and is legitimate". But the qualifying clause "as started in Bengal" gave it an ambiguous scope, both parties consoling themselves with their own interpretation. Refusal to incorporate the words "even at a sacrifice" in the resolution on *swadeshi* provoked Tilak to leave the meeting in protest with sixty of his followers. His threat that he would move an amendment to that effect in the open session, however, succeeded in getting the clause included in the resolution.

It cannot be said that either party gained a decisive victory at the Calcutta session. Both, in fact, continued to pay lip service to the need of unity. But the mood of the Congress in the subjects committee as well as in the open session was unmistakable. Pherozeshah Mehta played a leading part at the Congress, even occasionally acting as the spokesman of the aged President. But the atmosphere in Calcutta could hardly have been to the liking of a man accustomed to lord it over others. The Extremists more than once challenged his ruling and even defied his authority, which was a new experience for the "Lion of Bombay". The benign presence of Dadabhai Naoroji helped to cool tempers and to avert an open split. But the omens of the Surat crisis were clearly discernible in Calcutta.

Tilak had good reasons to be satisfied over the achievements of the Calcutta Congress. He summed them up humorously in the *Kesari :*

"Dadabhai, the venerable priest of patriotism, has joined in holy wedlock the National Congress and India's right of Swaraj. This marriage is not entirely approved by some of those who claim paternity of the Congress, but now that the marriage is effected no one has the power to dissolve it or hinder its final consummation—the attainment of Swaraj. Day by day the country is accepting in growing measure views and principles of the new party which is a gratifying sign of our political progress."

After the Calcutta Congress Tilak launched a whirlwind campaign to convert Congressmen to the new party. He faced a formidable obstacle not only in Pherozeshah Mehta, who still swore by the divine dispensation theory of British rule over India, but also Gokhale whose brief "flirting" with the Extremists had ended with his visit to Britain, where he had a series of talks with Lord Morley, the new Secretary of State for India. In his Banaras presidential address Gokhale had told the world how he felt towards Morley as towards a master and how his heart hoped and trembled at the prospect of the appointment of "the reverent student of Burke, the disciple of Mill, the friend and biographer of Gladstone" to the India Office.

To be fair to Morley, he lost no time in disillusioning Gokhale and his fellow-Moderates by his blunt statement that it would be foolish to expect that the Liberal Party would be able to grant any political right to Indians immediately. He gave a still bigger shock by observing that the partition of Bengal was a "settled fact" because its reasons were administrative and not political. Nevertheless, Morley dangled before the Moderates the bait of reforms. Here is his description of a talk with Gokhale on August 1, 1906, in a letter to Lord Minto, the Viceroy of India :

"Gokhale made no secret of his ultimate hope and design : India to be on the footing of a self-governing colony. I equally made no secret of my conviction that for many a long day to come—long beyond the short space of time that may be left to me—this was a mere dream. 'For reasonable reforms in your direction', I said to him, 'there is now an unexampled chance'. . . . Only one thing can spoil it. Perversity and unreason in your friends. If they keep up the ferment in East Bengal, that will make it hard or even impossible for Government to move a step... We are quite in earnest in our resolution to make an effective move. If your speakers or newspapers set to work to belittle what we do and to clamour for the impossible, then all will go wrong."

Gokhale readily acquiesced, adds Morley, and wrote to his friends in India "striking a most friendly and hopeful note". It was not surprising, therefore, that Gokhale should have returned to his Moderate shell with added conviction and hope after his return from Britain. The responsibility for the rapidly worsening relations between the Moderates and the Extremists, therefore, must be attributed at least partially to the hopes kindled in the former by Morley. That "disciple of Mill" was playing for higher stakes still. A study of his pronouncements cannot but lead one to the conclusion that the policy of the British Liberal Government, as of its predecessors, irrespective of party labels, was to isolate the Extremists with a view to crushing them. The influence which Morley established over the Moderates emboldened him to say the next year :

"Anybody who has read history knows that the Extremist beats the Moderate by his fire, his fiery energy, his very narrowness and concentration. But still we hold that it would be the height of political folly for us at this time to refuse to do all we can to rally the Moderates to the cause of Government simply because the policy will not satisfy the Extremists. Let us, if we can, rally the Moderates, and if we are told that the policy will not satisfy the Extremists, so be it. Our line will remain the same . . . Some of them are angry with me. Why ? Because I have not been able to give them the moon. I have got no moon, and if I had, I would not give them the moon."

Tilak was not enamoured of the moon. Nor was he to be beguiled by its reflection. With his hard-headed realism he knew that the Liberals in power would not be different from the Conservatives in so far as imperialist policies were concerned. Morley, he said, might have kindled his rushlight at Mill's lamp but he emitted smoke rather than light. Politics only admits self-interest and turns to philosophy when it serves its interests. Tilak wrote :

"We leave it to our readers to decide whether they should admire the wisdom of Morley's remarks or whether they should praise the folly of some of our leaders who have entirely depended on his favours. Morley's speech is quite in keeping with British diplomacy. His argument about the partition of Bengal is so silly and exasperating that we are led to observe that immediately after becoming the Secretary of State for India he seems to have mortgaged his philosophic wisdom. The Secretary of State is the head and mouthpiece of the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy. Do you mean to say that when the whole bureaucracy, the whole body of Anglo-Indians is against you, the Secretary of State will set them aside and give you some power ?"

Tilak's warning was justified not only by the unconscionable delay in introducing the reform scheme, but also by Morley's palpable inability to halt the steamroller of repression, notwithstanding his liberal professions. Not for the first time had a British statesman broken to the heart words which were uttered to the ears. The deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh in May 1907 was only to serve as a prelude to the transportation of Tilak in 1908, to which Morley had meekly to agree. As for the Morley-Minto reforms, Gandhi told Lady Minto in 1932, "they have been our undoing. Had it not been for the separate electorates then established, we should have settled our differences by now". Lady Minto protested that "the separate electorates were proposed by your leader and predecessor Mr. Gokhale".

"Ah," said Gandhi, "Gokhale was a good man, but even good men may make mistakes."

It is only fair to add that when Lord Morley introduced the Reform Bill in Parliament in December 1908, Tilak was a prisoner in Mandalay. But he had already made a strong protest against the pernicious principle of communal electorates.

The foregoing indicates how Morley's blandishments laced with threats succeeded in winning over the Moderates. British imperialism was playing a double game. While Lord Minto was receiving the Aga Khan's deputation to demand separate electorates for the Muslims, Lord Morley was trying in his talks with Gokhale to isolate the Extremists from the Moderates. The aim of both attempts was the same : "Divide and rule".

In vain did Tilak try to expose the artificial division of Indian political opinion into Moderate and Extremist in so far as the third party was concerned. Those words had a definite relation to time, he said. Extremism was a natural growth. The Extremists of today would be the Moderates of tomorrow just as the Moderates of today were the Extremists of yesteryear. "When the Congress was started, even Dadabhai was considered an Extremist. Our sons will call themselves Extremists and us Moderates and so on from generation to generation." This reasoning failed to appeal to the Moderates, who regarded moderation and belief in Britain's mission as articles of faith. Apart from its ideological aspect, the issue had boiled down to the necessity of gaining a firm hold on the Congress in view of the expected reforms.

To prepare the ground for them Gokhale undertook a lecture tour in Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab in February and March 1907 to expound his doctrine of moderation and constitutionalism. His thesis was that we should resort only to constitutional methods to bring about the changes we wanted. This was necessary not only for ordered progress but also to escape repression. Such views were deceptively simple but, as Tilak was quick to point out, they applied only to democratic countries like Britain where the Government was answerable to the country and was thrown out if it failed to win the confidence of the electorate. "Is there anything of the kind in India ?", Tilak asked. "Can Mr. Gokhale or his Moderate Party show us the constitution of India which would confer this right on the people ?"

"The Government of India is the creation of the British Parliament and is theoretically responsible to that Parliament and not to the people of India. The naked truth of the Indian situation is that the right to punish anyone who goes against the Government of India rests with the Government and the rules and regulations about it are to be found in the Indian Penal Code. In all seriousness one can suggest that what Mr. Gokhale calls India's constitution is really the Indian Penal Code. If he and his Moderate friends suggest that our agitation should be within the four corners of that Code, we can appreciate the argument. Then it will mean that it should be legal and legitimate. That is perfectly understandable."

This does not mean, Tilak added, that we should resort to illegal methods or an armed uprising, which was ruled out. The form of struggle of a subject country must be determined by circumstances. Every practicable method of bringing pressure on the rulers must be exploited. Not constitution (which did not exist), or law (which could be changed according to the whim of the bureaucracy) but justice and the inalienable right of a people to be free must be the determining factors of Indian politics. Freedom does not descend to a people; the people must rise to it and wrest it from unwilling hands.

"Our methods, therefore, must be based on self-reliance. There is boycott, for example. It is voluntary and non-violent. We do not advocate picketing or compulsory prevention of the purchase of foreign goods. And in passive resistance we shall simply refuse to notice such measures as the Seditious Meetings Act. But we do not care what happens to ourselves. We are devoted absolutely and without reservation to the cause of the Indian people. To imprison even 3,000 or 4,000 of us at the same time would embarrass the bureaucracy. That is our object—to attract the attention of England to our wrongs by diverting trade and obstructing the Government."

Gokhale's constitution recoiled from such strong meat while Pherozeshah Mehta dismissed it as sheer lunacy. Their objection was based as much on principle as on expediency. Gokhale did not want opposition to overstep certain well-defined limits. He might have justified boycott as a counsel of despair, but persistence in it would only prejudice if not render abortive the expected political reforms. Besides, as he later exclaimed at Surat, "How can we snap our fingers at the Government ? Surely, we cannot flout the Government. It will throttle our movement in no time."

CHAPTER XI

FOUR PILLARS

GEORGE NATHANIEL CURZON was one of the greatest pro-consuls that Britain sent to India, but he proved one of the least popular. Ever since his arrival here in 1899 he was obsessed by a grandiose vision of himself as Caesar and consumed by his own restless energy. During his six years' regime he displayed a curious combination of concern and contempt for the Indian people, contempt predominating in the later years. For their only business was to be governed efficiently by the Englishman with or without their consent. In the farewell speech after his resignation following the tussle with Lord Kitchener, the Commander-in-Chief, he blandly stated that he had not offered any political concessions to the people of India because "he did not regard it as wisdom or statesmanship in the interests of India itself to do so" !

It was inevitable that the rule of such "a superior person" should provoke discontent and anger. Especially his partition of Bengal in 1905 created an unprecedented storm. The whole country was convulsed with sorrow and resentment by the dismemberment, which was opposed by every community and shade of opinion in Bengal. Meetings, memorials, prayers and even a monster petition to the British Parliament failed to undo "the crowning folly" of Curzon. Even so moderate a politician as Gopal Krishna Gokhale was constrained to compare him with Aurangzeb in his presidential address at the Banaras Congress.

The people of Bengal rose as one man to fight the partition. October 16, 1905, when it was put into effect, was observed as a day of mourning. Kitchen fires went unlighted. People walked barefoot. They tied the red

Rakhi to each other's wrist as a symbol of fraternity. A meeting which was called that evening at the Calcutta Town Hall had to be split into four separate assemblies, so great was the crowd. It adopted a charter of Bengal's unity and declared a general boycott of British goods in protest against the partition.

Tilak heartily welcomed the patriotic upsurge in Bengal and set about to mobilise the nation for the boycott. He called the partition a blessing in disguise—for it helped create a new consciousness of national solidarity. Bengal's cause soon became India's cause and the movement was amplified into a fourfold programme of Boycott, *Swadeshi*, National Education and Swaraj. In a leading article in the *Kesari* under the heading "National Boycott" on August 22, 1905, Tilak wrote:

"It appears that many people have not yet grasped the full significance of the boycott movement. Such measures are absolutely necessary especially when there is a struggle going on between a people and their alien rulers. The history of England itself contains a noteworthy instance of how an angry people proceeded to chastise their king for having refused their demands. We have neither the power nor the inclination to take up arms against the Government. But should we not try to stop the drain of millions of rupees from the country? Do we not see how the Chinese boycott of American goods has opened the eyes of the United States Government? History abundantly proves that a subject people, however helpless, can by means of unity, courage and determination overcome their haughty rulers without resort to arms. We, therefore, feel confident that people in other parts of the country will not fail to lend a helping hand to the Bengalis in the present crisis."

Tilak stressed both the positive and negative aspects of the boycott movement. In the first place, it would give a fillip to the use of *swadeshi* goods about which there was unanimity of opinion in the country. In Maharashtra particularly the *swadeshi* movement had an early origin. It could be traced to G. H. Deshmukh (Lokahitwadi), mentioned in an earlier chapter, who exhorted the people to use *swadeshi* articles, however rough and coarse they might be. But it was Ranade who focussed public attention on *swadeshi* by his lectures in 1872 and 1873. The industrial domination of one people by another, he pointed out, attracts much less attention than its political subjection. And it is exactly because it is insidious that its effects are more disastrous. Ranade, therefore, supported the adoption of *swadeshi* as a religion so long as the Government did not extend protection to Indian industries. With his constructive genius he helped establish the Industrial Conference.

Ranade had a zealous follower in G. V. Joshi—the "Popular Uncle"—who took a vow to use only Khadi spun and woven by himself. This was four decades before Gandhi made Khadi a plank of his national programme. It was in such homespun garb that Joshi attended the glittering pageant of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in Delhi as a representative of the Sarvajanik Sabha.

Like his master, Gokhale also paid homage to *swadeshi* which "at its highest is a deep, passionate, fervent, all-embracing love of the motherland". The Indian Government's policy of free trade was apparently based on the economic thinking prevalent in those days, but its political character could not be disguised. It destroyed our traditional crafts and stifled attempts to start indigenous industries. It also indirectly tightened Britain's hold over India. In the *swadeshi* and boycott movement, therefore, lay not only our economic salvation but also a powerful lever for liberation. Tilak realised its dual possibilities more clearly than most of his contemporaries. On the one hand he proceeded to give a fillip to *swadeshi* enterprise and, on the other, he drove home its political character. He chid those who raised doubts as to how they would get sufficient *swadeshi* goods even if they desired to use them by saying :

"Their argument is that first we must have mills, then we would start producing *swadeshi* goods and not until then would they consider whether to use them. The folly of such an argument is indeed so apparent as to be pitiable. Just as it is foolish to expect a person to learn swimming before getting into the water, equally foolish it is to say that people should use *swadeshi* after there is sufficient production of indigenous goods. This production is possible only when there is sufficient encouragement either from the people or from the Government. Under the present circumstances encouragement from our rulers is not possible and if people also raise doubts, the local trade and industries, which have just managed to survive would become extinct. Those who advocate the postponement of *swadeshi* till enough *swadeshi* goods are produced are deliberately distorting and misrepresenting the present movement."

Tilak made no bones about the political character of the *swadeshi* and boycott movements. He asked people to give preference to Indian goods even at a sacrifice, but where they were not available they should patronise only non-British goods :

"The immunity from danger enjoyed by the British Government in India has inspired it with a spirit of recklessness and complete disregard for the opinions of the ruled. We should take advantage of the present agitated state of public mind and establish a central bureau for the collection and dissemination of information regarding indigenous and non-British manufactures. This bureau should have its branches all over the country and unremitting efforts should be made to keep up the movement by means of lectures and meetings and also by the introduction of new industries."

Tilak's actions conformed to his words. He used only *swadeshi* goods for his personal and household needs. It was also his practice to use *swadeshi* paper for his journals and when that was not available to buy non-British paper.

He helped enterprising young men to start cottage industries and lent his full support to the "Paisa Fund" movement, which was started in 1903 with a view to collecting "one pice from each person" for encouraging Indian industries. Tilak also took the lead in establishing the Bombay Swadeshi Co-operative Stores in 1906, which is still flourishing. He was on its first Board of Directors along with Sir Ratan Tata and Sir Manmohandas Ramji. He sponsored many *swadeshi* exhibitions, including one in his own house, and toured all over Maharashtra to popularise *swadeshi*.

Apart from Bengali leaders like B. C. Pal and Aurobindo Ghose, Lala Lajpat Rai was the foremost leader from other provinces to extend support to Tilak's fourfold programme. (Actually, it was only threefold, for Swaraj was the objective that *swadeshi*, boycott and national education were intended to attain.) The Lal-Bal-Pal trio popularised the new slogan "Militancy—Not Mendicancy", which was first raised at the Delhi Congress. It also sought to remove the impression that boycott was meant for application only in Bengal and that it was to be effective only until partition was undone.

What impact the boycott made on British trade is seen from the wail of *The Englishman,* which was an organ of the British community in Calcutta :

"Many prominent Marwari firms have been absolutely ruined and a number of the biggest European import houses have either to close down their piecegoods branch or to put up a very small business. As for stocks in warehouses. they tend to grow larger. These facts are now so well known that it is idle to attempt to hide them. Indeed the time has come when all injuries inflicted on trade by boycott should be made fully known. There is no question of encouraging the boycotters as they need no encouragement. But there is the question of thoroughly awakening the public at home and the Government of India to the fact that in boycott the enemies of the Raj have found a most effective weapon for injuring British interests in the country. Boycott must not be acquiesced in, or it will more surely ruin the British connection with India than an armed revolution."

Tilak's belief that *swadeshi* and boycott would prove a potent political weapon was justified even earlier than he probably hoped. According to Lala Lajpat Rai, it was at the Delhi Congress that Tilak began to think in terms of a passive resistance campaign. Its object was : (1) to destroy the hypnotic spell which had made the people and the country accept the omnipotence of their rulers; (2) to create a passionate love of liberty accompanied by a spirit of sacrifice and readiness to suffer for the cause of the country; and (3) to win India's independence.

The idea of passive resistance revolved in Tilak's mind for a year and it was only after the Calcutta Congress (December 1906) that he spelled it out. In the celebrated speech on "The Tenets of the New Party" he said :

"We are not armed and there is no necessity for arms either. We have a stronger weapon, a political weapon, in boycott. The whole of the administration, which is conducted by a handful of Englishmen, is carried on with our assistance. We are willing instruments of our own oppression. Englishmen know that they are only a handful in this country and it is the business of every one of them to fool you into believing that they are strong and you are weak.

"If you have not the power of active resistance, have you not the power of self-denial and self-abstinence so as not to assist the foreign Government to rule over you? This is boycott and this is what is meant when we say boycott is a political weapon. We shall not give them assistance to collect revenue and keep peace. We shall not assist them in fighting beyond the frontiers or outside India with Indian blood and money. We shall not assist them in carrying on the administration of justice. We shall have our own courts and, when the time comes, we shall not pay taxes. Can you do that by your united efforts? If you can, you are free from tomorrow."

Here is Tilak in 1906 anticipating, almost item by item, the non-co-operation movement which Gandhi launched 14 years later. The Lokamanya seems to be speaking in the very accents of the Mahatma in his appeal to the people's capacity for self-denial. Despite the tremendous national upsurge caused by the Bengal partition, however, the time had not yet come for inaugurating a passive resistance movement. The country had yet to pass through a long period of struggle and suffering before it was ready for the non-co-operation movement under the banner of Gandhi. Nevertheless, the credit of being the first to postulate in precise terms the potentialities of passive resistance for the liberation of an unarmed people must go to Tilak.

Tilak was active in the field of national education, too. It was, of course, to be expected of a man whose first love was education and who was a founder of the Deccan Education Society. Even private educational institutions were subject to Government's control through various overt and covert means like the notorious Risley circular. He urged those in charge of them to maintain their independence and self-respect even at the risk of forfeiting the grants-in-aid. When Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, then a student of the Fergusson College, was fined ten rupees and rusticated from the hostel by its principal for participating in a *swadeshi* meeting, Tilak pointed out the paradox of such disciplinary action in Poona when Gokhale was justifying the boycott of British goods in Manchester. He also took to task an English professor for asking students not to participate in the *swadeshi* movement. He condemned the arbitrary curb on students in the name of discipline and quipped that he did not mind their joining even Government schools so long as they were not prevented from attending his lectures!

In 1906 Tilak helped to establish the **Maharashtra Vidya Prasarak Mandal**. When the **Samarth Vidyalaya**, which was conducted under its auspices first at Kolhapur and then at Talegaon, ran into financial difficulties, he undertook a lecture tour and collected Rs. 20,000 for it. He also proposed the founding of a university for national education but the idea could not be given a concrete shape.

Tilak defined national education as that which enabled one to know the nation. That was precisely what the schools and colleges failed to do. In America, he said, the Declaration of Independence was taught to students in schools. Such instruction would be considered seditious in India. For instance, our students did not know that "six crores of rupees are drained out of this country every year for sugar. All this is due to the industrial policy of our Government, but we do not know it. We have come to learn these things 25 years after leaving the colleges. Our young men should know them in the prime of their life. In other countries, technical and industrial education is an important part of education, but the educational institutions in India are intended to produce only petty officials". Tilak was an advocate of the mother-tongue as a medium of instruction as also of religious education which would promote toleration and respect for each other's faith.

As in so many other fields, Tilak took the lead in proposing that Hindi written in the Devanagari script should be the national language of India. At a conference of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha in December 1905 he said : "A common script is part and parcel of a national movement. If you want to draw a nation together, there is no force more powerful than a common language." A standard script, he thought, was even more important than the standard time which was then introduced by Lord Curzon throughout India.

Tilak was a pioneer of the prohibition movement though it formed no part of the boycott campaign. He had taken interest in the temperance movement, as it was then known, ever since he became a member of the Bombay Legislative Council. He attributed the evil of drink solely to the

British regime. Whereas drinking was common in the western countries, it had spread in India only in the wake of the British. The excise revenue which was barely a thousand rupees per district under the Peshwas, increased to six lakhs of rupees in 80 years of British rule. The Government alone was thus responsible for the prevalence of drinking, which was against our religious teaching and social customs.

Tilak was a member of the managing committee of the Temperance Association, which was formed in Poona in 1907 with Gokhale as president. It conducted powerful propaganda, including peaceful picketing, for prohibition. But when under the pressure of excise officials the police began to molest the volunteers, the anti-drink movement took a militant turn. Tilak planned to organise a campaign to picket liquor shops when even peaceful persuasion was prohibited. He urged upon the young generation to banish drink :

"Young men must be prepared to fill the jails in resisting the policy of the upholders of drink. They must be actively helped by their neighbours and relations. Your hatred of drink must be so powerful that the misery of going to jail while fighting it must pale into insignificance."

Not only did the prohibition campaign achieve a striking success with the closure of numerous liquor shops all over Maharashtra but it also made the Government suspect that, like *swadeshi,* the anti-drink campaign was being utilised by Tilak as a political weapon. The loss of the excise revenue was bad enough, but its political implications were worse. It is intriguing to speculate how the prohibition campaign would have developed had Tilak not been arrested for sedition in June 1908. Like many other movements it petered out during his forced absence.

CHAPTER XII

THE SURAT SPLIT

WHO broke the Congress at Surat on December 27, 1907? The question was debated with heat and passion as long as the participants in that historic session were alive. Even now the Surat Congress intrigues students of Indian politics. For it marked the great divide in the Congress when the Moderate sheep were separated from the Extremist goats.

Voluminous statements of both sides as also the eyewitness accounts of some foreign observers are available to enable an impartial assessment of the Surat split and of the role played by Tilak in it. For, he was the hero—or the villain—of the Surat Congress. It was his defiant stand against the election of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose as president which precipitated the violent *mêlée* and split the Indian National Congress.

As we have seen in a previous chapter, the battle of Surat was really joined at Calcutta. The threatened crisis was averted there, but only "by the adoption by the Moderates of no small part of the Extremist policy", as the London *Times* taunted them. There was reason to believe that they had already chalked out at Calcutta a long-term strategy to defeat and frustrate the Extremists. They turned down Lajpat Rai's invitation to hold the next session at Lahore and opted for Nagpur which was more amenable to Pherozeshah Mehta's influence. They were also said to have hit upon the choice of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose as the next president. More ominous than this was their determination to tone down, if not throw overboard, the Calcutta resolutions on *swadeshi*, boycott and national education.

This they did at the very first opportunity which presented itself at the Bombay Provincial Conference held at Surat on March 29, 1907. While its president Dr. Bhalchandra Bhatavadekar expatiated on the virtues of moderation, Pherozeshah Mehta browbeat the conference into jettisoning the resolutions on boycott and national education. As for the resolution on *swadeshi,* the president suggested that it was more suited to the Industrial Conference than the National Congress! Similar tactics were adopted at the Central Provinces and Berar Provincial Conference at Raipur. Its president disallowed even the singing of *Vande Mataram* at the conference on the ground that it was banned in Bengal. At the U.P. Provincial Conference at Allahabad 200 delegates were excluded from the meeting because they were supporters of boycott.

Such tactics could not have been adopted all over the country by the Moderates without a prearranged plan. The Extremists, therefore, had no alternative to taking up the gauntlet. They made a determined effort at Nagpur to win a majority in the reception committee, which was to elect the president. While the Moderates succeeded in enrolling only 800 members, the Extremists secured 1,800 votes, which just fell short of the three-fourths majority needed for the election of the president. The Moderates soon realised that they were in no position to have their way and declared the reception committee's inability to hold the Congress at Nagpur notwithstanding the strong protest of the Extremists and their readiness to assume full responsibility for it. Pherozeshah Mehta, to whom the issue was referred, promptly accepted an obliging invitation from Surat, where he had scored an easy win at the Provincial Conference earlier in the year.

An oblique light is thrown on all these manoeuvres by a letter written by Gokhale to Wedderburn on October 11, 1907, to which a reference is made in Morley's *Recollections:*

"One of the most interesting Indian things that have come my way this week is a letter from Gokhale to Wedderburn. The one absorbing question (Gokhale says) is how the split in the Congress, now apparently inevitable, is to be averted. 'The outlook at this moment is as dark as dark could be.' He has no hope that any solution could be found short of removing the sittings of the Congress from Nagpur. But this means a split, as the New Party (Militants) in that case will probably insist on holding their own separate Congress at Nagpur. If a split does come, it means a disaster, for the bureaucracy will then put down both sections without much difficulty. They will brush away Gokhale and his friends on the ground that they have no large following in the country and will put the New Party down on the plea that the most thoughtful people are against them.

"I have often thought during the last twelve months that Gokhale as a party manager is a baby. A party manager or, for that matter, any politician aspiring to be a leader should never whine. Gokhale is always whining. Now, if I were in Gokhale's shoes, I should insist on quietly making terms with the bureaucracy on the basis of Order plus Reforms. If he should have the sense to see what is to be gained by this line the split, when it comes, should do him no harm because it would set him free to fix his aims on reasonable things, where he might get out of us 60 or 70 per cent of what he might ask for."

Tilak took Mehta's artful change of the Congress venue from Nagpur to Surat in a sporting spirit. The Nationalist Party, he said, "must go wherever Pherozeshah Mehta decides to hold the Congress, for it was never its intention to break the Congress or prevent it from being held. But let Mehta remember that this dispute would not be over so soon. The quarrel between the old and the new parties would continue till the new party succeeds. Nobody should feel that a secure place like Surat would be found every year. In fact, none knows whether Surat is a secure place or not."

Such was the atmosphere in the country when the reception committee was formed in Surat. Needless to say, it was a packed body and the Moderates hoped to have everything their own way, including the president's election. To their chagrin, the unexpected release of Lajpat Rai on November 11 introduced a new rallying point for the Extremists. Letters and telegrams poured in from all over the country proposing his name as president. Mehta sent Gokhale and other Moderate leaders to ensure the smooth election of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose. Gokhale tried to win over the Nationalists by the argument that it would not be proper for Lajpat Rai to occupy the chair as the Congress proposed to adopt a resolution of protest against his deportation. To which the obvious reply was that his election as president would itself serve as a hundred times stronger protest.

When argument failed to win over the opposition, it was bluntly told that the Moderates controlled the reception committee—intimation of the meeting to outside members having been purposely delayed—and that they would have their own way. Even the motion proposing Lajpat Rai's name was ruled out of order, which left the Extremists no alternative but to walk out in protest. Dr. Rash Behari Ghose was declared to have been "unanimously" elected president of the Surat Congress.

In a series of editorials in the *Kesari* Tilak counselled patience and restraint to his followers and turned down the suggestion of holding a separate Nationalist Congress :

"A little dispassionate consideration will show that the Nationalists are bound to dominate the Congress next year if not this and, therefore, they must make an effort in that direction and not give up the Congress and start a new body. It may be that the Moderates will be in a majority at Surat but that need not unnerve the Nationalists. They should try to press their point of view, which has already been meeting with the approval of the people."

In another editorial he insisted that Lajpat Rai should be elected president, but pointed out: "The real issue of contention is not who should be the president but whether a particular set of people should be left free to behave autocratically and suppress other points of view. The Nationalists also want the Congress. It is not their intention to break it or create a lawless situation. But they will not allow the monopoly or autocracy of Mehta and Wacha and they are not prepared to be guided by Gokhale, who is anxious not to displease the Government. The root of the controversy regarding the choice of the president is here. It is a question of principle and not of personalities."

Tilak and Lajpat Rai reached Surat on December 23 and 24, respectively, and received a tumultuous welcome from the citizens, before which even the president-elect's official reception paled into insignificance. Lajpat Rai, meanwhile, had declared that he was not in the running for the presidential election. This announcement was greeted by the Moderates with relief and joy, which were to prove short-lived. Intense activity was evident in both camps for almost twenty-four hours of the day. Both held their separate preliminary conferences to devise their lines of action. They also held public meetings to explain their policies.

The reception committee had entrusted the work of drafting the resolutions to Gokhale but, curiously, no draft was ready until the very opening of the session. Suspicions were already aroused owing to the omission of *swadeshi,* boycott and national education from the list of subjects to be discussed at the session, which was circulated ten days earlier. A belated denial did not wholly remove the suspicions and a conference of 500 Nationalist delegates resolved to prevent any retrogression from the stand taken by the Congress at Calcutta by all constitutional means, even by opposing the election of the president, if necessary.

Mediators such as Lajpat Rai and Dr. Rutherford, M.P., who was a visitor to the Congress, were active and various joint committees of reconciliation were suggested to bridge the gulf between the two camps. On the morning of December 26—the day on which the session was to begin —Tilak and other Nationalists saw Surendranath Banerjea and offered to withdraw their opposition to the president's election if the *status quo* about the main resolutions was maintained and a graceful allusion was made in the inaugural speeches to the popular desire to have Lajpat Rai in the chair. Banerjea readily agreed to this but Malvi, the chairman of the reception committee, proved obstinate.

The previous day Tilak happened to get a draft copy of the Congress constitution prepared by Gokhale. In this draft the object of the Congress was stated to be "the attainment by India of self-government similar to that enjoyed by other members of the British Empire". This might have been a minor or even an unwitting departure from the Calcutta resolution, which mentioned "self-governing colonies", and on his attention being drawn to it Gokhale readily agreed to amend it. But the lapse naturally added to the Extremists' doubts about the Moderates' *bona fides.*

These were strengthened when the draft resolutions were distributed to the delegates in the Congress *pandal* just before the inauguration of the session on December 26. Each one of them had undergone a sea-change. The Calcutta version of the *swadeshi* resolution called upon the people "to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference over imported commodities even at some sacrifice". In the Surat draft the key words *even at some sacrifice* were omitted.

The Calcutta resolution on national education proposed "to organise a system of education—literary, scientific and technical—suited to the requirements of the country on national lines and under national control". The Surat draft altered this to a proposal "to organise an independent system of education—literary, scientific and technical—suited to the requirements of the country". But it was in the boycott resolution that the most significant change was effected. The Calcutta Congress was "of opinion that the boycott movement inaugurated by Bengal by way of protest against the partition of that province was and is legitimate". This was transformed at Surat into "this Congress is of opinion that the boycott *of foreign goods* resorted to in Bengal by way of protest against the partition of that province was and is legitimate".

It was not surprising that this unwarranted tampering with the Calcutta resolutions and the manner in which the changes were sprung upon them should have incensed the Nationalists. It could be construed only as a barefaced attempt to convert the Congress into a Moderate organisation and to exclude the Extremists from it. There was no time to ask for explanations or to seek the revision of the draft. Nor was it likely that the explanation Gokhale later gave for the changes would have satisfied the Extremists.

Regarding the omission of the words "even at a sacrifice" from the *swadeshi* resolution, he said, it was due to a faulty reproduction of the resolution in the journal *India* (the Congress organ published in London) which was the only paper available to him then for reference. Regarding the resolution on national education, Gokhale said the slight alteration made was only to improve its phraseology. And as for the resolution on boycott, he justified the change on the ground that Tilak's interpretation of the original Calcutta resolution was "unfair and unjustifiable" and that was why the alteration was deemed necessary.

The Surat Congress thus opened in an atmosphere of tension and excitement, which visibly increased when the draft resolutions were circulated. The address of welcome by the chairman of the reception committee was heard in silence by the packed assembly. So also was the speech of Ambalal Desai proposing Dr. Ghose as president. But pandemonium broke loose as Surendranath Banerjea rose to second the motion. "Again and again he shouted, unheard as silence. Even a voice like his was not a whisper in the din." Malvi frantically rang his bell for order. Surendranath Banerjea stood on the table to make himself heard, but the clamour mounted again. The sitting had to be abruptly adjourned.

Frantic attempts were made that night to bring the two groups together, but they proved unavailing. Tilak proposed that a committee of one Moderate and one Extremist from each province should be selected under the chairmanship of Dr. Rutherford and that the committee's decision should be binding on both wings. Apparently, Pherozeshah dismissed the proposal out of hand. Before the adjourned session met on December 27, Tilak sent a note to the chairman of the reception committee that he wished to address the delegates on the election of the president after it was seconded. No reply was received.

Surendranath Banerjea was called upon to complete his unfinished speech when the session was resumed next day. Tilak sent a reminder which was again ignored, whereupon he proceeded to the platform to assert his right of speech. Amidst much shouting Malvi declared the motion of the president's election as duly carried. Dr. Rash Behari Ghose promptly rose to deliver his address. "Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen," he began, "my first duty is to tender you my thanks for the signal honour you have done me."

In the words of H. W. Nevinson, who was present on the occasion, beyond his "first duty" he never went. "As when lightning flashes in air surcharged with storm, Tilak was seen standing straight in front of the presidential chair itself, expostulating, protesting, all in that calm, decisive voice of his, the voice of a man indifferent to fate. He had given notice of an amendment, he was there to move it, and there he would remain.

" 'You cannot move an adjournment of the Congress,' cried Malvi, 'I declare you out of order.' 'I wish to move an amendment to the election of president, and you are not in the chair,' Tilak replied. 'I declare you out of order,' cried Dr. Ghose. 'You have not been elected,' answered Tilak, 'I appeal to the delegates.'

"Uproar drowned the rest. With folded arms Tilak faced the audience. On either side of him, young Moderates sprang to their feet, wildly gesticulating vengeance. Shaking their fists and yelling to the air, they clamoured to hurl him down the platform. Behind him Dr. Ghose mounted the table and, ringing an unheard bell, harangued the storm in shrill, agitated, unintelligible denunciations.

"Restraining the rage of Moderates, ingeminating peace if ever man ingeminated, Gokhale, sweet-natured even in extremes, stood beside his old opponent, flinging out both arms to protect him from the threatened onset. But Tilak asked for no protection. He stood there with folded arms, defiant, calling on violence to do its worst, calling violence to move him, for he would move for nothing else in hell or heaven. In front, the white-clad audience roared like a tumultuous sea.

"Suddenly something flew in the air—a shoe !—a Mahratta shoe !—reddish leather, pointed toe, sole studded with lead. It struck Surendranath Banerjea on the cheek; it cannoned off upon Pherozeshah Mehta. It flew, it fell. and as at a given signal white waves of turbaned men surged upon the escarpment of the platform. Leaping, climbing, hissing the breath of fury they came, striking at any head that looked to them Moderate and, in another moment, between brown legs standing upon the green-baize table, I caught glimpses of the Indian National Congress dissolving in chaos."

This graphic description must be supplemented by the observation that the violence was not on the side of the Extremists alone, as implied. The Moderates were equally guilty of it and in the statement issued by the Nationalist Party the reception committee was explicitly charged with dismissing the nationalist volunteers and hiring hooligans who were stationed at various places in the *pandal* and who "took part in the scuffle on behalf of their masters". Nor is there any proof that the shoe was hurled by a

Nationalist. It might as well have been hurled by a Moderate at Tilak.

Whoever was primarily responsible for the rowdyism, it was a black day in the annals of the Indian National Congress. The prestige it had earned by a patriotic uphill struggle for twenty-two years was dissipated in the twinkling of an eye. Fury and passion soon gave place to sorrow and shame. But the split in so far as the Moderates were concerned was complete and final. They decided to hold a convention next day to which admission would be strictly restricted to those prepared to sign an omnibus pledge of moderation and constitutionalism. (Were they conscious then, one wonders, that they were consummating just what Lord Morley was egging them on to do for the preceding three years ?)

Tilak, however, had not yet lost all hopes of a compromise. In a letter to the Moderate leaders he wrote :

"In the best interests of the Congress, my party and I are prepared to waive our opposition to the election of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose and we are prepared to act in the spirit of forget and forgive provided, firstly, the last year's resolutions on Swaraj, *swadeshi,* boycott and national education are adhered to and each expressly reaffirmed, and, secondly, that such passages, if any, in Dr. Ghose's speech as may be offensive to the Nationalist Party are omitted."

The Moderates were too bitter even to acknowledge this conciliatory gesture and they went ahead with their convention. But Tilak still entertained hopes of restoring unity when the passions aroused at Surat had calmed down and both parties were in a reasonable frame of mind. After all, he argued, the break can only benefit the third party which would exploit it to the full to crush the Nationalists first and then turn to the Moderates. He, therefore, restrained his more ardent followers like Aurobindo Ghose from holding a separate congress of the Nationalists.

That his subsequent attempts to heal the breach evoked a welcome response from at least some of the Moderates is evident from the fact that they joined hands with the Extremists in holding the Poona District Conference, the Dhulia Provincial Conference and the Pabna Conference in Bengal over which Rabindranath Tagore presided. But Tilak was sentenced to transportation in July 1908 and the attempts later made by his followers to hold a regular session of the Congress at Nagpur were summarily put down by the Government under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

The Nationalists were thus sent into the wilderness and, by the obliging help of the Government, the Moderates gained unchallenged control of the Congress. They retained it for nearly eight years, during the first six of which Tilak was in jail and the Extremists were subjected to the full blast of the Government's wrath.

With Tilak's restoration to freedom in 1914, followed by the death of Gokhale and Mehta the next year, the complexion of the Congress began to change. Thanks mainly to Tilak's earnest effort for unity, the two wings came together at the Lucknow Congress in 1917. But it proved to be a brief reunion and with the emergence of Gandhi on the political scene and Tilak's death in 1920, the Moderates (or the Liberals as they later styled themselves) gradually passed into limbo.

CHAPTER XIII

TRANSPORTATION

IF the murders in Poona in 1897 were the immediate provocation for Tilak's first conviction for sedition, the cult of the bomb which made its appearance in Bengal on April 30, 1908, was responsible for his arrest two months later. On that day at Muzaffarpur, Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki threw a bomb with the intention of killing Kingsford, the District Judge, whose savage sentences on political offenders had made him most unpopular. But the explosion actually killed two European women. This incident created horror, panic and consternation and its reactions were witnessed all over the country. The Government sought to fight terrorism with counter-terrorism, while the Anglo-Indian newspapers virtually lost their mental balance.

On a single day (June 8, 1908) two repressive measures were put on the statute book. The Explosive Substances Act and the News paper (Incitement to Offences) Act ordained Draconian punishments to those who could be caught within their net. Mere intent and attempt to cause an explosion (even if none actually took place) were made punishable with transportation for fourteen years. The Newspaper Act empowered the district magistrates to confiscate a printing press or suppress a newspaper if it gave incitement to acts of violence. A number of prosecutions for sedition under Section 124-A and 153-A were launched and "thundering" sentences were passed, which provoked mild protests even from Lord Morley.

Anglo-Indian journals gave up all pretence of sanity. A couple of extracts will reveal the nature of their venomous outbursts. The *Asian* wrote : "Mr. Kingsford has a great opportunity, and we hope he is a fairly decent shot at short range. We hope he will manage to secure a big bag and we envy him his opportunity. He will be more than justified in letting daylight into every strange native approaching his house or his person and for his own sake, we trust, he will learn to shoot fairly straight without taking his weapon out of his coat pocket."

The *Pioneer* went still further : "The wholesale arrest of the acknowledged terrorists in a city or district, coupled with an intimation that at any repetition of the offence ten of them would be shot for every life sacrificed would soon put down the practice."

While the Government took no action against the Anglo-Indian disseminators of hatred, the editors of nationalist newspapers were awarded drastic sentences on one charge or other. It was for his article in the *Kesari* entitled "The Country's Misfortune" that Tilak was arrested on June 24, 1908. Later, one more article under the heading "These Remedies Are Not Lasting" was made the ground of another charge to make conviction doubly certain.

These articles only amplified the public statement which Tilak and twenty-four other leading Nationalists had issued on the acts of violence in Bengal on May 22 : "We firmly believe that these regrettable occurrences are the result of prolonged and persistent disregard of public opinion and a continued policy of repression on the part of the Government and not, as alleged in certain quarters, of any speeches or writings. The true remedy for the present state of things lies not in the adoption of any measures of repression and coercion, which must prove futile, but in the prompt redress of popular grievances and in making liberal concessions to the legitimate demands of the people in a spirit of sympathy and statesmanship."

Sympathy and statesmanship, however, were conspicuous by their absence in the British rulers. They were out to teach a lesson to the Extremist agitators and particularly to their leader Tilak, who had become the focal point of

Indian unrest. Secret official documents and correspondence between Lord Morley (the Secretary of State), on the one hand, and Lord Minto (the Viceroy) and Lord Sydenham (the Governor of Bombay) on the other, which have since come to light, leave no doubt whatever of the animus in official circles against Tilak. Here is a revealing extract from a letter of Sydenham to Morley :

"Tilak is not simply a journalist betrayed by a generous enthusiasm for impracticable ideas into rash and injudicious writing. He is one of the chief conspirators, *perhaps the chief conspirator,* against the existence of the British Government in India, of the weak points of which he has made a careful study. His Ganapati festivals, Shivaji celebrations, Paisa Fund and national schools were all instituted for one purpose—the overthrow of British rule. If he had been allowed more time to mature his plan, it is quite possible that he might have succeeded in promoting a general strike, which is one of the Russian methods advocated by the violent party. There is no direct evidence to show how far he was cognisant of the design of so-called anarchists of Bengal, but there is no doubt that he was in close communication with some of the leaders."

Here then was the real case for Tilak's prosecution. These were the reasons why he was hauled before the court. His crime lay in not what he wrote in the *Kesari* but in what he stood for in politics—the overthrow of British rule. Tilak's guilt lay not in the Indian Penal Code but in his burning patriotism and that was why the Government resolved to remove him from its path by hook or by crook. As *The Manchester Guardian* observed : "He has been condemned on his 'general record'—which means that he has been punished because he can and does stir up to higher things the emotions of a multitude that understands him."

As in 1897, Tilak was in Bombay when the warrant of arrest was served on him on June 24. Even as he was boarding the train in Poona he was confidentially informed by a friend of the impending arrest and advised to return home. Tilak replied: "What's the use of going back? Have I to raise an army or dig trenches to repel the enemy's attack? The Government has turned the whole country into a vast prison. What it will do is only to remove me from this large prison to a small one." The execution of the warrant was deliberately delayed so as to prevent Tilak from moving the court for bail. When an application was made next day, it was not only turned down by the Chief Presidency Magistrate but one more charge was added in respect of another article.

On July 2, M. A. Jinnah renewed the application for bail before Justice Davar who was to hold the sessions trial. It was the same Davar, who as Tilak's counsel in 1897, had managed to secure bail for Tilak. Despite the situation being similar and the earlier ruling strengthening Tilak's application, it was summarily turned down. Justice Davar even refused to give any reasons for his decision, which showed how the judicial wind was blowing. He also decided to empanel a special jury "selected from the citizens of Bombay but from the higher class of citizens". This virtually meant Europeans because seven of them found place on the jury as against two Indians despite their ignorance of the Marathi language in which the offending articles were written.

The stage was thus set for the historic trial on July 13. Considerable surprise was caused by Tilak's decision to defend his own case. It was partly due to the difficulty of finding a suitable European barrister in view of the prevailing sentiment. Even leading Indian barristers seemed to be reluctant to take up the case as defending a sedition case hindered professional advance then. Again, there was the question of finance. The people were so much cowed down by repression that nobody came forward to raise a defence fund as in 1897.

The conviction was a foregone conclusion in any case. And much was gained in the event by Tilak personally conducting his defence. He was not merely an individual seeking acquittal but a nation's representative championing the cause of freedom. He stood in the dock as the symbol of the people's will to be free, as the spokesman of the oppressed and suppressed millions of India. Tilak's trial forms a memorable chapter in our legal annals, but it is even more memorable in the history of our freedom. His final 21-hour address to the jury displayed amazing legal erudition and forensic skill but, more than that, it constituted a testament of liberty, a charter for those who seek to break the shackles of foreign rule.

"Today I am in the dock", Tilak told the jury, after giving it a masterly exposition of the law of sedition, "for opinions which I have formulated. If you want reform, you might be in the dock tomorrow. It is not sedition to find fault with the Government or to advocate the reform of administration. It is one's inherent right to fight for the liberty of his people, for a change in the Government." He asked the jury to appreciate correctly the distinction between the bureaucracy and the Government :

"Bureaucracy is not the Government. To criticise the bureaucracy is not bringing into contempt or hatred the Government established by law in this country. It is legally recognised that to contend for the right of self-government is not seditious. How can you demand a share in the administration unless you can show that the present administration has some defects ? If you cannot find any defects you have no claim for reformation. It may be unpleasant to the bureaucracy but there is nothing in it which brings contempt or hatred upon the Government—I mean Government in the abstract."

Tilak refuted the prosecution's suggestion that he supported the cult of the bomb. On the contrary, he told the jury, he had frequently stressed that bomb-throwing was not the method of winning Swaraj and that it was not sanctioned by morality. By writing the two articles in the *Kesari,* he discharged a duty he owed as a journalist to the public :

"Khudiram Bose had just been sentenced and I had to express myself on the subject. That was my duty whether the times were excited or peaceful. And if the times are times of unrest, it becomes the duty of a newspaper man to impress upon the Government the causes of the unrest. It is a very hard duty—a very thankless duty and sometimes a very risky duty. If the newspaper is to go on for the benefit of the people and the interest of the Government, you cannot allow any other consideration to interfere with your duty. A critic may find fault, but to question the writer's motive is extremely ungenerous."

Tilak said that his real object in writing the articles was to expose the calumnies of the Anglo-Indian Press and to refute the rabid suggestions they made for intensifying repression and even shooting natives out of hand. His intention was certainly not to excite disaffection, for he was only replying to the vicious statements in the Anglo-Indian papers against which the Government took no action whatever.

"As a matter of fact, we are entitled to greater latitude than the Anglo-Indian papers like the *Pioneer* since the Penal Code says what is done in self-defence is not an offence. Now, gentlemen of the jury, if you were the representatives of your community what would you have done under these circumstances? Evidently you would have done what I did. I have referred to the article in the *Pioneer* in very mild terms; I have replied to argument only with argument. Are we to allow the *Pioneer* to go on abusing the people of this country? In that case it would be much better to abolish the vernacular Press and leave the *Pioneer* in the field alone. It was my duty to reply to such vilification."

After pointing out the vagueness of the charges (which were unfairly amalgamated) and the distortions in the English translation ("that kind of translation will make anything seditious") and the overriding factor of intention (which was not proved), Tilak came to the end of his address. It had occupied him for a little more than 21 hours spread over five days. He concluded, keeping in view that seven out of nine members of the jury were European :

"I can certainly ask at your hands the same privilege in this country as is enjoyed by the English Press. It is the same question which was fought out in England as long ago as 1792. English people now enjoy the liberty of the Press which they demanded and got in the eighteenth century. This is a similar case. You are proud of your traditions. You have got liberty of the Press after a long struggle and I believe that you attach more importance to that than even we do here. I can trace a great struggle between the people on the one hand and a mighty bureaucracy on the other. And I ask you to help us, not me personally but the whole of India in our endeavours to obtain a share in the government of this country. You have heavy responsibility upon you. If at least one of you would come forward and say that I was right in what I did, it will be a matter of satisfaction to me. I appeal to you not for myself but in the interest of the cause which I have the honour to represent. It is the cause that is sacred."

Tilak was followed by the Advocate-General, who made a sneering reference to "the torture suffered by the jury in having to listen for five days to Tilak". This opening remark itself showed the temper and tenor of his address. He relied heavily on Justice Strachey's judgment in 1897, conveniently forgetting that it was overruled on a material point by a Full Bench. The Advocate-General claimed that the translations were correct and that the jury was not concerned with the freedom of the Press as suggested by Tilak. "Fiddlesticks ! You are guardians of the Penal Code and the Penal Code protects the Press." Finally, he summed up Tilak's argument as follows : "If you don't give Swaraj or if you don't make a beginning to give it, we won't stop the bombs."

Justice Davar's summing up, which began at 7 p.m. on July 22, 1908, was brief. But it was unmistakably slanted. The fact that earlier in the evening he had declared his intention to finish the case that very day showed towards what end the trial was moving with the inevitability of a Greek tragedy. The jury retired at 8 p.m. for consideration of the verdict. An oppressive silence hung in the court-room. Tense anxiety was writ large on every face. Only Tilak, whose fate hung in the balance, looked unconcerned. "Dadasaheb," he said to his friend Khaparde, "today the complexion of the game appears different. Most probably it is going to be transportation for life. This might be our last meeting."

The jury returned at 9-20 p.m. It held Tilak guilty on all three counts by a majority of seven to two—seven Europeans against two Indians. The judge accepted the verdict and asked Tilak whether he wished to say anything more before sentence was passed. His reply, already quoted in the introductory chapter, has become a part of our history :

"All I wish to say is that, in spite of the verdict of the jury, I maintain that I am innocent. There are higher powers that rule the destiny of things and it may be the will of Providence that the cause which I represent may prosper more by my suffering than by my remaining free."

Two generations have been thrilled by these defiant and noble words. But they seem to have provoked Justice Davar only into throwing off the mask of judicial impartiality and restraint he had assumed while briefing the jury two hours earlier. He added insult to injury while passing the sentence :

"It seems to me that it must be a diseased mind, a most perverted mind that could say that the articles which you have written are legitimate weapons in political agitation. They are seething with sedition; they preach violence; they speak of murders with approval. The cowardly and atrocious acts of committing murders with bombs not only seem to meet with your approval, but you hail the advent of the bomb in India as if something has come to India for good. Your hatred of the ruling class has not disappeared during these ten years. And these articles were deliberately and defiantly written week by week not, as you say, on the spur of the moment but a fortnight after that cruel and cowardly outrage had been committed upon two innocent Englishwomen.

"You wrote about bombs as if they were legitimate instruments in political agitations. Such journalism is a curse to the country. Having regard to your age and other circumstances I think it is most desirable in the interest of peace and order and in the interest of the country which you profess to love that you should be out of it for some time. I pass on you a sentence of three years' transportation under each of the first two charges, the sentences to run consecutively. You will thus have six years' transportation. On the third charge I fine you Rs. 1,000."

Under a heavy police escort Tilak was promptly spirited away through a side entrance of the High Court to the Colaba railway station where a special train was kept ready to remove him to Ahmedabad. Thus his last sight was denied to the thousands of people who had collected around the High Court despite the late hour and pouring rain. The huge crowds which used to assemble near the High Court during the trial had dispersed as usual in the evening. But when the news that the judgment would be pronounced that very night spread in the city, vast multitudes returned to the precincts of the High Court. The police, too, were marshalled in full force and no serious disturbance took place that night.

Bombay city awoke to a complete *hartal* next morning. Life was at a standstill. Sporadic strikes were held in some of the textile mills since the trial began and clashes had occurred on its very first day. But on July 23, which incidentally was Tilak's fifty-second birthday, most of the mills failed to open. Markets and shops were also spontaneously closed. The streets presented a deserted appearance except where mill-workers moved in an angry mood, occasionally throwing stones and indulging in other forms of rowdyism as inevitably happens on such occasions.

The strike continued day after day and the authorities were at their wit's end. The police were supplemented by the military and firing was frequently resorted to. During the six days of strike—one for every year of Tilak's sentence—14 persons were killed and 30 wounded. Unofficial estimates, however, put the figure of the dead at 30 and of the wounded at 100.

Great pressure was brought on the mill-owners to open their factories and the Governor called a conference of leading men to help the authorities to restore law and order. But the normal life of Bombay remained paralysed for six days. In many other cities and towns also business was spontaneously suspended. Students abstained from schools and colleges, and meetings were held to protest against the savage sentence.

The Press, too, joined the chorus of protest. Particular objection was taken to the *ex cathedra* remarks of Justice Davar while passing sentence. The *Mahratta* wrote : "The judge took advantage of his position to say that Tilak only *professed* to love his country. It is a heartless white lie; it is cruel; it is mean; it is cowardly." The *Bengalee*, edited by Surendranath Banerjea, said : "We regard the sentence as monstrous, as utterly out of proportion to the offence alleged to have been committed and as one which will be universally condemned by our countrymen and all right-thinking men."

Even the comments of the British Press were revealing : *The Times* wrote : "Tilak remained at the moment of his conviction the most conspicuous politician in India, and among large sections of the people he has enjoyed a popularity and wielded an influence that no other public man in India could claim to equal." The *Star* said : "It appears that Tilak's articles were not direct incitements to the use of bombs... Nothing is easier than to fasten upon the rhetoric of a politician in critical times a darker meaning than it could sustain in times of peace." *The Manchester Guardian* noted : "The memory of Tilak's trial and conviction will serve for many a long day to prevent that amelioration of race bitterness and that restoration of confidence without which the good government of India by Englishmen is entirely impossible and without which all reforms will be completely futile."

Lord Morley was so shaken by these comments that he reproachfully wrote to the Government of Bombay on July 31 : "I won't go over the Tilak ground again beyond saying that if you had done me the honour to seek my advice as well as that of your lawyers, I am clear that I should have been for leaving him alone. And I find no reason for believing that any mischief that Tilak could have done would have been so dangerous as the mischief that will be done by his sentence. Of course, the milk is now spilt and there is an end to it."

Reactions to Tilak's conviction and the consequent disorders and strikes in Bombay were noticed even outside India and Britain. It is well known that Lenin characterised these strikes and riots as the first stirrings of the revolutionary movement in India.

On August 7, a petition was made to the Full Bench of the Bombay High Court for permission to appeal to the Privy Council. Joseph Baptista argued it ably but it was dismissed on September 8. The Bench, however, ordered Tilak's conviction on the third count to be quashed. Yet another attempt was made for special leave to appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, but it also failed.

Meanwhile, high-level discussions were going on in the Secretariat about the place of detention of Tilak, who was temporarily confined in the Sabarmati jail in Ahmedabad. A decision to deport him to Burma was taken, but the Home Department was not in favour of Mandalay as it was said to be associated with lenient treatment to Lajpat Rai in the previous year. The Insein jail, ten miles from Rangoon, was considered the most suitable but for the possibility that its damp climate might aggravate Tilak's diabetes.

The ultimate choice (which was kept a secret) fell on Mandalay and Tilak was put on board the R.I.M.S. "Hardinge" at Bombay on September 14 with sealed orders to its captain. On September 21, the Bombay Government announced that the sentence of transportation passed on Tilak had been commuted to one of simple imprisonment in consideration of his age and condition of health. This no doubt spared Tilak the hard labour to which he was subjected in 1897 but, on the other hand, it deprived him of the remission and other concessions allowed to transported convicts.

The "Hardinge" reached Rangoon on September 22, and the next morning Tilak reached Mandalay where he was to spend the next six years of his life.

CHAPTER XIV

IN MANDALAY

KING Thibaw of Burma was deported to Ratnagiri, Tilak's birthplace, after his defeat in the war of 1885. Twenty-three years later, Tilak was exiled to Mandalay, Thibaw's capital, after his second conviction for sedition. This exchange might have been fortuitous and the British Government was apparently unconscious of its historical irony. But it could not have failed to strike Tilak as he was escorted to his cell in the Central Jail of Mandalay on the morning of September 23, 1908. There he was to spend the next six years in virtual solitary confinement except for a few months when he was removed to Meiktila owing to an outbreak of cholera in Mandalay.

The cell was a wooden cage measuring 20 feet by 12 feet. Tilak lived on the first floor and the ground floor served as a kitchen and bathroom. These quarters were originally meant for European convicts and were cut off from the main part of the jail by a wooden barricade. In summer, the longer season, the place was a veritable furnace owing to the scorching heat. The wooden palisading afforded no protection either from the heat or the glare. In winter the cold was bitter and the wooden structure failed to shut out the biting winds.

So great was the hardship to which Tilak was exposed at Mandalay that he applied to the Government for a transfer to the Andamans, which was then dreaded as the *Kala Pani* (the black waters) to which revolutionaries were deported. He believed that the colder climate of the Andamans would agree with him better and also that he would be entitled to more facilities as a long-term convict. But the request was turned down.

What must have been Tilak's thoughts that September morning as he was deposited in that grim cell? Did his mind dwell on the serried past and recall the cavalcade of events, beginning from the day he founded the New English School to the night he was sentenced to six years' transportation for trying to subvert the British Raj? In between lay numerous struggle, reverses and successes each making its distinct contribution to his service of the country, each marking a milestone in his life.

And now suddenly his public life was abruptly closed; even his personal life was confined to the four walls with their mocking bars. He was merely a convict with a ticket, a criminal with a long "time" stretching before him. His life would henceforth revolve on its own axis. Nothing would relieve its isolation or break its monotony except the visits of the jailor and the interview with his relatives once every three months.

An acid test for Tilak's spirit was provided when within a year of his internment in Mandalay, with the long vista of the sentence still before him, he was sounded regarding a conditional release by his friend Khaparde, who was in England to present an appeal to the Privy Council. Tilak's reply was characteristic :

"I shall tell you my mind about the acceptance of any conditions. If they are the same as offered to me in 1898, I would not hesitate to accept them. I do not care for demonstrations and such other honours. I would gladly forgo them. But once out of jail I must have the same liberty of action as every citizen enjoys under the law of the land. That was secured to me by the conditions of 1898. But I do not think the same conditions would be offered now. They will, if offered at all, be harsher and I do not see how I can accept them. I have now nearly completed one year of my punishment and after five years more I shall be, at any rate I hope to be, amongst you as a free citizen. Do you think I should surrender this chance, distant as it is, by voluntarily incapacitating myself (by the acceptance of the conditions) for any public or political work forever?

"I am already 53 years of age. If heredity and average health be any indication of the longevity of a man, I do not hope to live at best for more than ten years. Of these, five years, say, are available for unrestrained public work which, if I accept any condition of the kind you mention. I shall have to live as a dead man. To say the least, I do not like that kind of life. It is true that my activity is not confined to politics and I can do literary work even if I be prohibited from taking part in politics. I have considered this view fully and have come to the conclusion that it is inconsistent with all my antecedents. In fact, I shall be undoing my life's work thereby. You know that I have never lived exclusively for my family or for myself alone, but have always endeavoured to do my duty to the public. Now judge what would be the moral effect of my effacing myself from public life for the sake of five years' personal comfort."

The mind is its own place and in itself can make a heaven of hell. And it must not have taken long for a stoical mind like Tilak's to adapt itself to circumstances and to utilise them in the best manner possible. Not for him idle regrets or escapist reveries, the cultivation of moods and attitudes for which a jail provides endless leisure. His was a severely disciplined mind, which was not affected by transient sorrows and joys.

Tilak soon settled himself into a routine of reading and thinking though the solitude must have pressed heavily upon him at times. The man of action absorbed himself in reading, in learning new languages and in contemplating on the true message of the *Gita*.

"I do not know what would have happened to me", said Tilak in an interview after his release in 1914, "if I had not been allowed to have books because the room and the compound had become my entire world for the duration of my imprisonment. Outside the compound there was, so to speak, a void. Even in the case of books there were three separate and sometimes contradictory orders issued. At first whatever books I wanted were given to me after being scrutinised by the jail authorities. Of course no books on current politics were sanctioned. In the same way no newspapers or magazines, whether published in India or in England, were permitted. After a time, the order to allow all the books to remain in my possession was changed and I was allowed to have only four books at a time. When I complained about it to the Burma Government, I was again allowed to have all the books I wanted with me as I was writing my *Gita-Rahasya*. When I was released the number of books in my possession was about four hundred."

Tilak was a voracious reader, but his interests were essentially philosophical. Apart from the reference works he needed for his *magnum opus* we find him asking for other books in every letter home. They included works by Kant, Hegel, Butler, Locke. Darwin, Hume, Rousseau Voltaire, Diderot and Max Müller in addition to Sanskrit classics, books on Christianity and Buddhism and the *Koran*. The true bibliophile that he was, he was anxious about his library at home and sent frequent instructions about its proper maintenance and warnings about indiscriminate lending. He would mention the exact cupboard and shelf where a particular book he wanted could be found.

During his stay at Mandalay Tilak studied Pali, French and German. Great was his joy when he attained sufficient mastery of German to read Weber in the original at the magnificent speed of five pages an hour! "I really feel I have utilised some part of my imprisonment to good purpose", he exclaimed. French he found comparatively easy and he seems to have been amused by its nasal pronunciation "which was just like that of our people of Ratnagiri". Pali, of course, was easy for the Sanskrit scholar that he was.

For an account of Tilak's life in Mandalay we have to rely mainly on his letters from there and the interview he gave after his release. He was allowed to receive and write one letter every month with the stipulation that the correspondence should concern itself strictly with personal and family affairs. There is also the record by V. R. Kulkarni, a convict from Satara district, who was assigned as his cook for nearly three years. "You are a prisoner and so am I. You must not make a fuss over me", Tilak used to tell Kulkarni, who was deeply devoted to "Maharaj" as he called Tilak. "I fell ill many times," wrote Kulkarni, "but Maharaj looked after me as my father would and took care of me. Though the authorities wanted to send me to the jail dispensary, he kept me with himself and nursed me. He even cooked for me and not until he had fed me did he take food himself."

Kulkarni tells us how Tilak used to feed sparrows. The birds became so accustomed to him that they used to hop about the room, sit on his writing table and even perch on his shoulders when he sat down to dinner. One day the Jail Superintendent paid Tilak an unexpected visit and was most surprised to see him surrounded by a swarm of these birds. "How is it that they are not afraid of you, Mr. Tilak ?" he asked in surprise. "I don't know," replied Tilak, "but it is perhaps because I don't harm them or frighten them away. Whenever possible, I feed them. After all, the sparrows are innocent birds, but even against venomous creatures like snakes I bear no ill-will and they also are not frightened of me. My heart is free from hatred or fear of any of God's creation."

It is the monthly letters, however, which reflect in a mirror, as it were, Tilak's feelings and thoughts, sorrows and hopes during his six years' stay in Mandalay. Most of Tilak's life was spent in the public gaze and little is known of his domestic life. He was generally considered to be unemotional and austere, but his letters (sixty of which are published in his biography by N. C. Kelkar) belie that impression. They show Tilak to be a devoted husband, a loving father and a solicitous friend. His wife also suffered from diabetes and in every letter he makes anxious inquiries about her health and suggests various treatments. He asks her to go to Sinhgad to recoup her health and even holds out rosy hopes of his early release so as to cheer her. Both, however, seemed to have a premonition that they would never see each other again and when the telegram informing him of her death on June 7, 1912, was received Tilak broke down. A companionship of 41 years had ended under tragic circumstances. He wrote to his nephew :

"Your wire was a very great and heavy blow. I am used to take my misfortunes calmly, but I confess that the present shock shook me considerably. According to the beliefs ingrained in us, it is not undesirable that the wife should die before her husband. What grieved me most is my enforced absence from her side at this critical moment. But this was to be. I always feared it and it has at last happened. But I am not going to trouble you further with my sad thoughts. One chapter of my life is closed and I am afraid it won't be long before another will be. Let her last rites be duly performed and her remains sent to Allahabad or any other place she might have desired. Carry out, literally, all her last wishes if you have not done so already. As regards her things and valuables make a list thereof and keep them under lock and key until my release. I believe Mathu and Durgi (Tilak's daughters) are still there. They as well as Rambhau and Bapu (his sons) must have keenly felt the bereavement especially at a time when I am away. Let them remember that I was left an orphan when I was much younger than either of them. Misfortune should brace us for greater self-dependence."

In many of his letters Tilak makes inquiries about the education of his sons and Jagannath Maharaj, the adopted son of Baba Maharaj. Frequent suggestions are made about their schooling. There are also detailed instructions about the conduct of the appeal that was filed in the Privy Council regarding the Tai Maharaj case. And he also found time to advise an humble shepherd, who had somehow managed to approach Tilak regarding a law suit he had lost. "How can I help the poor fellow at this distance? Please ask him to see Khaparde at Amraoti."

Tilak's letters from Mandalay provide us intimate glimpses of his mind and heart. They were meant for the eyes of the members of his family alone and thus there are no postures and pretensions which public figures habitually adopt in their utterances. We see here "Tilak plain", tender beneath his stoical exterior, suffering adversity bravely and comforting and counselling others. He has to deal with a hundred and one mundane matters in his correspondence, with vexatious law suits, illnesses and bereavements, but his mind dwells on higher things and in almost every letter he asks for books and more books.

A most fruitful result of this constant reading and reflection was the *Gita-Rahasya*, which Tilak wrote in the five months from November 1910 to March 1911. Tilak thus joined the ranks of illustrious prisoners like Bunyan, Raleigh, Voltaire and Paine who wrote their classics in jail. It was written in pencil on bound notebooks whose pages were counted and marked, no loose sheets or ink being allowed to him except for his monthly letter. Though the actual writing of the book of 800 quarto pages occupied only 108 days, it was the result of several years' reflection and study and Tilak took many months more to revise it. He writes on March 2, 1911:

"I have just finished writing my book on the *Gita* and I have given it the title *Gita-Rahasya*. In it I have expounded some original ideas which, in many ways, will be presented to the people for the first time. I have shown in this book how the Hindu religious philosophy helps to solve the moral issues involved in everyday life. To a certain extent my line of argument runs parallel to the line of thinking followed by Green in his book on Ethics.

However, I do not accept that the basis of morality is the greatest good of the greatest number or the human inspiration. What I have done in the *Gita-Rahasya* is to prove, by comparing the philosophy of the *Gita* and the West that ours, to put it at the lowest, is in no way inferior to theirs. I had been thinking about the *Gita* for the last twenty years and the ideas I propose to expound are challenging—so far no one had dared to put them forward. I have yet to cite quite a few supporting arguments from books which are not with me at present, which I can do only after my release."

Tilak followed a strict routine at Mandalay. He got up early and meditated for an hour. After ablutions and tea he devoted himself to reading and writing. For lunch he had a fairly liberal ration which was allowed to be supplemented privately. From Poona, he occasionally received parcels of condiments, pickles and, in season, mangoes. Reading and writing again—though this became difficult during summer—followed by a glass of lemon juice at 1-30 p.m. Then work again and supper was taken at 5 p.m., the cell being locked up at 6 p.m. Before retiring another hour was devoted to meditation. When his diabetes worsened after two years, he took only *puris* made of barley flour and milk and curds, which he liked thick and sour. This diet seems to have agreed with his health.

And so the life in Mandalay went on, its deadening routine broken only by the change of seasons and the communion with the master-minds of old. On the whole, Tilak managed to maintain fairly good health. Once or twice a year he had slight fever but he did not suffer from any serious illness. His diabetes, however, became more acute and he also lost some teeth. His hearing and vision were also affected, but he attributed this only to old age.

The longest night must come to an end, and as 1914 dawned Tilak's deliverance was within sight. In Mav he sent his books to Poona and anxiously awaited the orders of his movement. Every day must have dragged with leaden feet as May turned into June. At last, early on the morning of June 8, 1914, the Jail Superintendent came to his cell and asked him to pack his effects. He was put on the train to Rangoon but even then precautions were taken to hide him from the public gaze. Next morning he was taken straight to the Rangoon harbour and put on board the s.s. *Mayo,* where he "recognised the faces of the Poona police". Tilak's exile was over.

CHAPTER XV

SEARCH FOR UNITY

A LITTLE after the midnight of June 16, 1914, Tilak was escorted by two police officers to his home in Poona, which he had left six years earlier, and set at liberty. The choice of this unearthly hour and indeed of the date of release was obviously meant to avoid public demonstrations. But the moment it was known that the Lokamanya was back amongst them a continuous stream of people wended its way to the Gaikwad Wada to offer its felicitations. Indeed, for the first two or three days Tilak could do little except receive the greetings of the people who came from far and near.

The earliest opportunity was taken to organise a public reception to Tilak, which provided him an occasion to unburden the thoughts that were pent up in his mind during the long years of exile. He said :

"I am back amongst you after six years and I am gradually getting acquainted with the present situation. My first reaction was like that of Rip Van Winkle, who slept for a number of years and found his world altogether changed. I was kept in such a rigorous seclusion by the authorities that it seems that they desired that I should forget the world and be forgotten by it. However, I have not forgotten the people and I am glad to notice that the people have not forgotten me. I can only assure the people that separation for six long years could not diminish my love for them and that I am willing and ready to serve in the same manner and in the same relation and in the same capacity which belonged to me six years before through it may be, I shall have to modify my course a little."

Tilak's dig at the authorities must have gone home.

They had desperately hoped that his prolonged detention in a distant land would deprive him of the affection and esteem of his countrymen. The correspondence between the Government of India and the Bombay Government, which has come to light since Independence, throws revealing light on the official mentality.

The exuberant welcome accorded to Tilak from all parts of the country and his decision to resume public activities naturally riled the Government. It prohibited students and its employees from calling on him. A police picket was posted at his residence to note the names of visitors, who were subsequently blacklisted and subjected to all sorts of harassment. The District Magistrate of Poona issued a proclamation to prevent popular ovations for Tilak in the ensuing Ganapati festival. Not content with this, he asked him not to associate himself with the celebrations in any manner. Tilak readily agreed as he was in no hurry to invite trouble until he had sized up the political situation which had undergone a metamorphosis since 1908. The Congress had become a mouthpiece of the Moderates. The Extremist ranks were in disarray and lying low. In the vivid words of Aurobindo Ghose : "A hush had fallen over the country. No man seemed to know which way to move and from all sides came the questions : What shall we do ? What is there we can do ? What next ?"

The onus of providing the answers to these questions devolved on Tilak no sooner than he was back on the political scene. There was no other leader of his status and following. There was none else who could evoke the enthusiasm or command the allegiance of the masses. It was no easy task for the "Rip Van Winkle", however, to size up the situation and to pick up the thread of the tangled political skein. First of all, he had to consult his colleagues and to rally his followers. Then he had to talk things over with those who then controlled the Congress. All through the eight years since the Surat split Tilak had never lost hopes of reuniting the two wings of the Congress under a common banner. Only after all this was done could he chalk out his policy.

While Tilak was thus cogitating, an event happened which suddenly transformed the situation and provided the key to the future, as it were. This was Britain's declaration of war on August 4, 1914. It was to colour and affect the political developments in India for the next four years just as the Second World War did in a more decisive manner during 1939-1945. And as on the latter occasion, its impact began to be felt here only after the fortunes of war turned against Britain.

Tilak was a frank exponent of the doctrine that England's difficulty was India's opportunity. This hard-headed realism has an historical validity whatever its loyalist or moralist critics might say. It can scarcely be doubted that had it not been for the two life-and-death struggles in which Britain was embroiled within the space of 31 years, India would have taken much longer to achieve independence. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Home Rule movement launched by Tilak received such massive support during the war years and gained for India a measure of responsible government.

It is significant that Tilak's first reaction to the war betrayed no bargaining spirit. He chivalrously declared in a statement on August 27, 1914 : "At such a crisis the duty of every Indian, be he great or small, rich or poor, is to support and assist His Majesty's Government to the best of his ability." He went further and declared :

"I have, like other political workers, my own differences with the Government as regards certain measures and, to a certain extent, even the system of internal administration. But it is absurd on that account to speak of my attitude as in any way hostile to His Majesty's Government. I may state once and for all that we are trying in India as the Irish Home Rulers have been doing in Ireland for a reform of the system of administration and not for the overthrow of the Government. I have no hesitation in saying that the acts of violence which have been committed in different parts of India are not only repugnant to me, but have, in my opinion, only unfortunately retarded, to a great extent, the pace of our political progress. Whether looked at from an individual or a public point of view they deserve to be equally condemned."

This declaration of loyalty, as it was dubbed, evoked reactions varying all the way from ill concealed scepticism to open disapproval. While it failed to make Tilak *persona grata* with the Government it exposed him to the charge of expediency, if not hypocrisy, in the eyes of his critics.

Tilak was 58 when he returned after his six years' incarceration in Mandalay. It was the longest of his three imprisonments and the solitary confinement had told heavily upon him. His spirit was unbowed, but the infirmities of age were plainly making themselves felt. Soon after his return he remarked to a friend : "My days are numbered. I may live for a year or two at the most."

Nevertheless, Tilak resumed his activities with his customary zeal and thoroughness. He set a threefold task before himself : (1) unity in the Congress; (2) reorganising the Nationalist Party; and (3) forming the Home Rule League. All these objectives were interlinked, and together they were meant to further the progress of the country towards Swaraj. Among these, unity in the Congress naturally received top priority. Though he was unfairly accused by his opponents of disrupting the Congress at Surat, nobody else believed more passionately in a united Congress. True, he wanted the Congress to be a dynamic institution and could not tolerate the milk-and-water approach of the Moderates; but he was keen to come to terms with them.

His efforts towards that end were naturally suspect in the Moderate camp. Strangely enough, they were misunderstood even by some of his more ardent lieutenants. They wondered whether his prolonged sufferings at Mandalay had not broken his spirit and transformed him into a

Moderate. At the Belgaum Provincial Congress (April 1916), he had to go out of his way to stress the virtues of compromise on his followers.

The main hurdle in the path of unity lay in the restrictions imposed on the organisations which then elected delegates to the Congress. No political association or public body could be recognised unless it accepted Article I of the Congress constitution which contemplated a Moderate creed with colonial self-government as the goal. The election of Congress delegates was thus placed exclusively in the hands of Moderate associations and an effective bar raised to the admission of the Nationalists.

Considerations of space preclude us from going at length here into the tortuous negotiations which took place between Tilak and the Moderates for getting the Article revised with a view to closing up the ranks of the Congress. Suffice it to say that Tilak made unity the first plank of his programme and did not rest content until it was achieved at the Lucknow Congress (December 1916). During these two years of negotiations his sincerity of purpose as much as his skill as a political tactician were seen to the best advantage.

The Moderate leaders of the Congress, led by Pherozeshah Mehta and Gokhale, however, resisted Tilak's attempts to rejoin the Congress with his followers. The former dismissed his appeals for unity as "mawkish sentimentality". "For my part," he wrote, "I think it is most desirable that each set of distinct convictions should have its separate Congress. To jumble them up in a body confuses the real understanding to the extent to which opinion really tends in one direction or another and it is not possible to make out what are the dimensions of cleavage and differences of opinion existing on any particular question."

It is easy to see at this distance of time that the apparently straightforward course suggested by Mehta put a premium on disunity and thus played into the hands of the Government, which never lost an opportunity of exploiting the differences among a subject people. But the fierce prejudices and suspicions of Mehta blinded him to such considerations; and to the end he remained an inveterate opponent of the return of the Nationalists to the Congress.

Gokhale, on the other hand, was more of a realist and was favourably disposed to the readmission of the Extremists to the Congress if it could be achieved on honourable terms. The first talks towards that end were held between Gokhale and Tilak at the instance of Mrs. Annie Besant in December 1914. Gokhale visualised the differences between the Moderates and the Extremists in a clear perspective. In a confidential letter to Sir Bhupendranath Basu he wrote :

"Mr. Tilak has told Mr. Subba Rao (General Secretary of the Congress) frankly and in unequivocal terms that though he accepts the position in what is known as the Congress creed, *viz.* that the aim of the Congress is the attainment by India of self-government within the Empire by constitutional means, he does not believe in the present methods of the Congress, which rest on association with Government where possible and opposition to it where necessary. In place of that, he wants to substitute the method of opposition to Government pure and simple within constitutional limits—in other words of Irish obstruction.

"Mr. Tilak wants to address only one demand to the Government here and to the British public in England, *viz.* for the concession of self-government to India and till that is conceded, he would urge his countrymen to have nothing to do with either public services or legislative councils and local and municipal bodies. And by organising obstruction to Government in every possible direction within the laws of the land, he hopes to be able to bring the administration to a standstill and compel the authorities to capitulate."

It is not clear how far Subba Rao's version correctly reflected Tilak's views. It seems somewhat to anticipate future developments and to project the shape which Indian politics assumed in 1920, the year in which Tilak passed away. But it highlights the gulf that then divided the two wings of the Congress and the fears that assailed Moderate leaders.

Tilak, on his part, never disguised his attitude. "What is the use of saying, as Gokhale is reported to have done, that Tilak will capture the Congress?"—he bluntly asked in a famous leading article in the *Kesari*: "The National Congress belongs to the nation. It is neither Tilak's nor Gokhale's property. It is the Congress itself which will decide its own policy, not any one individual. Every Congressman has a right to place his views before the Congress, to persuade the majority to adopt those views and so long as they are lawful and constitutional, they cannot be shut out or suppressed."

This extract reveals not only the vigour with which Tilak conducted political controversy but also the democratic faith which actuated all his activities. The position he adopted recalled the stand he had taken at the Surat Congress and both have been vindicated by time.

The death of Gokhale in February 1915, followed by that of Pherozeshah Mehta eight months later, negatively facilitated the return of the Nationalists to the Congress. Some of them desired to be present at the Congress session held in Bombay in December 1915 as spectators if not as delegates. But Tilak prevailed upon them not to do so unless and until the Congress creed was amended. A significant step was taken in that direction there. The Congress constitution was amended so as to throw its doors open to the Nationalists who could be elected by public meetings convened under the auspices of any association which was of two years' standing and which had for one of its objects the attainment of self-government within the British Empire by constitutional means. This gesture was welcomed by Tilak.

CHAPTER XVI

HOME RULE CAMPAIGN

ON the eve of the Bombay Congress session a conference of Nationalists was held in Poona to discuss the desirability of establishing a Home Rule League. Tilak wrote a series of articles in the *Kesari* expounding the utility of an organisation of this nature. Earlier in Madras a similar proposal was formulated by Mrs. Annie Besant, but her attempts to get the approval of the Congress at its Bombay session failed owing to the opposition of the Moderates.

No such necessity was felt by the Nationalists, who were still out of the Congress. Following the favourable recommendations of the Poona conference, the Home Rule League was formally established on April 28, 1916, at Belgaum with the object of "attaining self-government within the British Empire by all constitutional means and to educate and organise public opinion in the country towards the attainment of the same". Despite his being the League's moving spirit, Tilak did not become an office-bearer. Joseph Baptista, who had taken a leading part in its organisation, was elected its president, and N. C. Kelkar secretary; among the committee members were G. S. Khaparde, Dr. B. S. Moonje, R. P. Karandikar and D. V. Belvi.

The Bombay Provincial Conference held its annual session at the same place the next day. Its main business was the consideration of the terms of compromise offered to the Nationalists at the Bombay Congress. Tilak urged their acceptance although they did not fulfil all his expectations. Gandhi, who claimed that he was neither a Moderate nor an Extremist, supported Tilak and the resolution was unanimously passed, paving the way for the return of the Nationalists to the Congress fold.

Tilak's immediate objective after the Provincial Conference was to enrol members of the Home Rule League and to establish its branches in Bombay, Karnatak and the Central Provinces, to begin with. He explained the League's aims in a leading article in the *Mahratta :*

"It was generally recognised that the time had positively come for an organisation to be started for educating public opinion and agitating for Home Rule throughout the country. The Congress was the body which would naturally possess the greatest authority for undertaking such a work with responsibility. But the Congress, it is generally recognised, is too unwieldy to be easily moved to prepare a scheme for self-government and actively work for its practical success. The spadework has got to be done by someone. It can afford to wait no longer. The League may be regarded as a pioneer movement and is not intended in any sense to be an exclusive movement."

Tilak undertook an extensive lecture tour to popularise the League. He explained its aims and objects in vivid and telling metaphors : Home rule means only having the management of their home in their own hands. It is a means of changing the visible government while maintaining the invisible government as it is. A very simple definition of Home Rule which even a peasant would understand is that I should be in my own country what an Englishman is in England.

Tilak impressed upon his audience everywhere that to ask for Home Rule was no sedition. "It might have been so ten or fifteen years ago, but now the claim is conceded by the judiciary as well as the executive that Home Rule was a proper ambition for any nation to entertain." Little could Tilak have imagined that his speeches were being already examined by the Government for their seditious content. What really riled it was the evidence provided by his tour of the hold he still had on the masses. Everywhere he was received enthusiastically and thousands of people attended the League meetings. The Government was in no mood to tolerate mass agitation in the midst of the war. Ostensibly on the basis of his speeches at Belgaum and Ahmadnagar, the District Magistrate of Poona served a notice to Tilak on July 22, 1916, asking him "to show cause why he should not be ordered to execute a bond for a sum of Rs. 20,000 with two sureties each in a sum of Rs. 10,000 for his good behaviour for a period of one year".

Typical of official hostility as this notice was, it was made more obnoxious by its timing. For July 23 marked the sixtieth birthday of Tilak and thousands of his admirers had decided to celebrate it with the presentation of an address and a purse of rupees one lakh. Their enthusiasm was heightened rather than damped by the vindictiveness displayed by the bureaucracy and they gathered in vast numbers at the Gaikwad Wada where the function was held. A number of leading men from other cities specially came to Poona for the occasion which was observed with eclat.

Tilak was greatly moved by this exhibition of popular affection and esteem. He said in his reply:

"Even if I felt embarrassment in accepting the address I must formally accept it. But with the purse it is a different matter. I do not know what I should do with the money it contains. I do not want it for my own sake nor would it be proper to accept it for personal use. I can only accept it in trust for public work. The national task that faces us today is so great and so urgent that you must work together with zeal and courage greater than I might have been able to show. It is a task that cannot be put off. Our motherland tells everyone of us to be up and doing. I do not think that her sons will disregard this call. Here there is no room for rivalry, jealousy, honour, insult or fear. God alone can help us in our efforts and, if not by us, it is certain that the fruit will be gathered by the next generation."

The District Magistrate, who had issued the notice, himself acted as the judge when it came up for hearing on August 7. Not unnaturally, he held that "Tilak wanted to disaffect his audience against the Government" and directed him to execute the bond and sureties under Section 108 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Tilak's appeal to the Bombay High Court was heard by Justice Batchelor and Justice Lallubhai Shah on November 9, 1916. The hearing was brief, but the judgment was of paramount importance not only to the defendant personally but to the cause of free speech and the Home Rule movement. It quashed the interpretation of sedition which had hounded Tilak since his conviction in 1897. Mr. Justice Batchelor held that the construction of the word "disaffection" propounded by his predecessor was opposed to all ordinary English usage in words compounded with the participle "dis".

In exonerating Tilak, Justice Shah observed that "reading his speeches as a whole it appeared that his object was only to make a demand for Indians getting Home Rule, educating public opinion in support of the demand and enlisting membership of the Home Rule League. Tilak has not advocated any unconstitutional or unlawful methods in pursuing this objective".

Tilak's acquittal gave a fillip to the Home Rule movement. About this time Mrs. Besant also started a parallel Home Rule League in Madras, which was to bring her into trouble with the Government the following year. Both organisations had common aims and worked in close accord. Apart from carrying on propaganda, Tilak was busy drafting a "Bill for the Better Administration of India" with a view to submitting it to the British Parliament.

The Home Rule League was firmly established by the time the Lucknow Congress was held in the last week of December 1916, marking a watershed in the history of that organisation. In the picturesque words of its president,. Ambica Charan Mazumdar, "if the united Congress was buried in the debris of the old French garden at Surat, it was reborn in the Kaisar Bagh of Lucknow, the garden of the gorgeous King Wajid Ali Shah".

Tilak's journey from Bombay to Lucknow in the "Home Rule League special train" arranged by his followers was a triumphal procession. Cries of *Tilak Maharaj ki Jai* rent the air whenever the train halted at wayside stations and he was the recipient of numerous ovations. The reception at Lucknow surpassed all others though the special train reached there late in the night. A vast crowd was waiting at the station to welcome him and enthusiastic admirers insisted on dragging the carriage which took him to his camp.

Tilak was easily the foremost figure at the Lucknow Congress though he was making his appearance on its platform after eight long years. It was a happy sight to see Moderates and Extremists sitting and deliberating together. A still more welcome development was the concord established at Lucknow between the Congress and the Muslim League, which held its session simultaneously with that of the Congress. The three streams of Indian politics thus merged together for the first time and presented a united front to the Government.

The main resolution of the Lucknow Congress had a twofold aspect. The first resolved the Hindu-Muslim question with an agreed reservation of Muslim seats in the provincial legislatures by separate electorate. The second part of the resolution formulated a scheme of constitutional reform so as to raise the status of India from that of a dependency to an equal partner as a self-governing dominion in the British Empire. Tilak played a leading role in getting the resolution passed but his stipulation of a time limit to be embodied in it was not accepted by the Congress.

The Lucknow Congress quickened political life and gave it a new urge and direction. The demoralisation and frustration which had seized the nation since 1908 gave place to a consciousness of strength and unity. By broadbasing the demand for Swaraj the Congress posed a new challenge to the British Government. If the war was being fought for democracy, as the British Government asserted, it could no longer defer the satisfaction of India's political aspirations. The first reaction of the bureaucracy to the Lucknow demand was one of chagrin. Its Machiavellian efforts to drive a wedge between Hindus and Muslims were frustrated by the statesmanship of Tilak and the patriotism of Jinnah. Even the Moderates had apparently turned their backs on the Government.

Tilak summed up the achievements of the Congress session in the following words:

"Two things of transcendental importance happened at Lucknow. One was that a definite demand of Swaraj was unanimously formulated. The other was that Hindus and Muslims made that demand with a united voice. There is a feeling in certain quarters that extensive concessions were made to our Mussalman brothers, but that was necessary to enlist their hearty support to the demand of self-government, whether that was right or wrong from the point of view of strict justice. We cannot progress without their help and co-operation. If they get more concessions and weightage, their responsibility for getting Swaraj will correspondingly and proportionately increase. If there is a tripartite struggle, two parties must join together to eliminate the third. In the tug of war with the British, the Muslims must throw their weight on our side. To demand fearlessly that we shall rule ourselves is the immediate duty of one and all."

This extract may be usefully supplemented by a quotation from Mr. Jinnah's presidential address at the Muslim League session: "In its general outlook and ideal, the All-India Muslim League stands abreast of the Indian National Congress and is ready to participate in any patriotic efforts for the advancement of the country as a whole."

From Lucknow Tilak went to Kanpur and Calcutta, a trip which was to serve as a precursor to the countrywide tours he carried out during the next eighteen months. He conveyed the message of Home Rule wherever he went, now spelling it out, now emphasising its particular aspects and at times amplifying it and even giving it a new edge. At Kanpur, for example, he observed :

"We will remain in the Empire only as equals. We will not live in the Empire merely as servants and load-carriers. India has now realised the true strength and character just as the proverbial tiger cub, raised in a flock of sheep, realised its true nature on seeing its reflection in the water. The Indian people are now fully awakened to their true status and destiny. If the Japanese, who are Asians like the Indians, can enjoy the liberties and responsibilities of Swaraj, why cannot we ?"

The unity established at Lucknow and the upsurge of national fervour were viewed with alarm by the Government. In February 1917 the Punjab Government served an order under the Defence of India Act prohibiting Tilak's entry into that province. In June Mrs. Besant and her two colleagues were interned by the Madras Government. Meanwhile, in a secret circular issued to local Governments, the Government of India outlined the policy to be pursued in regard to the Home Rule agitation. It made no bones about the fact that "neither the reforms recommended by the Government of India nor any reforms which His Majesty's Government are likely to approve can bear resemblance to the extravagant demands for the grant of early Home Rule to India, which the agitators present to their deluded audiences. It is evident, therefore, that the wilder the hopes that are excited by the Home Rule organisations, the greater will be the disappointment and the more violent the protests when the actual reforms that may be approved by His Majesty's Government come in due course to be promulgated".

Home Rule was thus summarily put out of court by the powers that be. But it could not be put "entirely out of the mind", as they desired. On the contrary, the Government's polioy of persecuting its leaders only helped to intensify the movement. In a confidential report to the

Secretary of State, the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, wrote :

"Tilak, Mrs. Besant and others are fomenting with great vigour the agitation for immediate Home Rule and, in the absence of any definite announcement by the Government of India as to the policy in the matter, it is attracting many of those who hitherto have held less advanced views. The agitation is having a mischievous effect on public feeling throughout the country. Consistent and malicious attacks on the system and method of present administration are aggravating the danger."

The Viceroy, therefore, urged an early declaration regarding the constitutional changes proposed after the war. It was in response to this appeal that Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, made his historic announcement in Parliament on August 20, 1917. He declared : "The policy of His Majesty's Government is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire." Montagu added that progress in that direction could only be achieved by successive stages and that the Government must be judges of the time and measure of each advance".

Tilak welcomed the announcement as marking an advance in the right direction even though it was "unsatisfactory both in language and substance". He advised his countrymen to accept the spirit of the policy statement but to keep up the agitation for the better recognition of Indian aspirations and demands as embodied in the Congress League scheme. Tilak, like others, probably set a good deal of store by the impending visit of Montagu to India, though he did not share the Moderates' enthusiasm over "the golden prospects opened up by the Parliamentary announcement". Above all, he was most anxious not to allow it to cause a division in Indian opinion. But the Moderates' exuberance over the Montford Reforms ultimately made them part company with the Congress.

Montagu visited India in the autumn of 1918 and interviewed a multitude of people including politicians, officials and princes. His *Indian Diary* records his impressions of the visitors with devastating candour. He met Tilak as a member of the Congress deputation and also in his personal capacity: "We saw Tilak, the politician who probably has the greatest influence of any person in India and who is quite extreme... It was obvious that he was not going to be satisfied with anything but what the Congress asks for. 'We shall take whatever the Government gives us', he said, 'but it will not satisfy us unless it is at least what the Congress asks.' "

Referring to the exclusion of Tilak from the war conference called by the Viceroy on April 27, 1918, Montagu writes:

"With regard to Tilak, if I were the Viceroy, I would have had him in Delhi at all costs. He is at the moment probably the most powerful man in India and he has it in his power, if he chooses, to help materially in the war effort. If he is not there, it will always be said that we refused to select the most powerful people."

We have seen how on the morrow of the declaration of war Tilak voluntarily pledged his loyalty to the Government and assured it of full support in its hour of crisis. Government, however, failed to make any reciprocal gesture even to the extent of accepting his sincerity. Nor did it ask for the support of the Nationalists during the first two years of hostilities. When, however, the tide of war turned against Britain in 1917 a pressing need was felt for mobilising recruits and resources in this country. Despite this the Government persisted in giving all manner of pinpricks to Nationalist leaders. Even their demand for admission of Indians to the commissioned ranks of the army was turned down.

Tilak's attitude towards recruitment naturally underwent a change. He had earlier said: "If age and grey hair are no disqualifications, I am prepared to stand in the fighting line." But he was too much of a realist to follow the purely moral approach of Gandhi towards recruitment. Tilak wrote in the *Kesari* on February 20, 1917 : "What is the significance of this throwing open of military service to Indians by the Government? We shall indulge in a little plain-speaking in interpreting the significance of this step. It simply means that today the Government cannot do without our aid."

Lord Chelmsford's exclusion of Tilak from the Delhi meeting was sought to be made good by Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay, at the war conference he called in that city on June 10, 1918. But he gratuitously indulged in offensive remarks against the Home Rule Leaguers in his opening address and when he twice interrupted Tilak's speech the latter left the meeting in protest, followed by a number of other leaders. The insulting treatment provoked Tilak to declare bluntly in a speech in Poona:

"The British just want you to supply soldiers for the war. They tell us, 'a calamity is hanging over India'. What is that to us? Why should we come forward to protect that India in which we have no rights, in which we are treated like slaves ?... Government should by positive deeds infuse in Indians a spirit so that they may feel and say we would die for our country. Then I am sure we shall be able to raise an army of a crore of men. But by not conceding the demand of India, the British Government is pursuing a wrong policy. What are we to tell our men ? Join the army to strengthen the *zulum* of these English people ?"

This bitter denunciation went home and a gag order was imposed on Tilak under the Defence of India Act. It was probably his impending departure for England to fight the Chirol case which prevailed upon the Bombay Government to stay its hand from more drastic action.

The Calcutta session of the Congress held under the presidentship of Mrs. Besant expressed its "grateful satisfaction" over Montagu's announcement while urging "the necessity for the immediate enactment of a Parliamentary statute providing for the establishment of responsible government in India, the full measure to be attained with a time-limit to be fixed in the statute itself at an early date".

This hope was belied when the Montford Report was published in July 1918. Far from approximating or even anticipating Dominion status as in the Durham Report in Canada, the Montford Report merely introduced dyarchy in the Provincial Governments while leaving the Central Government as irresponsible and absolute as ever. Even in the provinces the Governors were invested with reserve powers, which hung like the sword of Damocles over the popular ministers.

Tilak's reactions to the Montford Report were strikingly revealed in the heading of his leading article in the *Kesari:* "IT IS DAWN, BUT WHERE IS THE SUN ?" A special session of the Congress held in Bombay in August 1918 to consider the Montford Report declared that "its proposals as a whole are disappointing and unsatisfactory". Speaking on the main resolution, which affirmed that "the people of India are fit for responsible Government and repudiate the assumptions to the contrary contained in the Report," Tilak observed:

"The Montford Report is a beautiful, very skilful and statesmanlike document. We asked for eight annas of self-government. That report gives us one anna of responsible government and tries to tell us that it is more precious than eight annas of self-government. The whole literary skill of the report lies in making us believe that one morsel of responsible government is more than sufficient to satisfy our hunger for full self-government. We now plainly tell the Government that we are thankful for the one anna of responsible government, but in the scheme we want to embody all that is there in the Congress-League scheme."

The shortcomings of the Montford Report more than ever convinced Tilak that the Congress must send a deputation to England to educate British opinion on India's legitimate aspirations. He had first mooted the idea in 1917 but it was dropped owing to doubts as to how a Congress deputation would be received by the British in the midst of the war. But its complexion had changed in 1918 and Tilak had to be present in London for the libel case which he had instituted against Sir Valentine Chirol. His attempt to sail from Colombo in April 1918, however, proved abortive owing to the last-minute cancellation of the Indian delegation's passports on the orders of the War Cabinet.

Strange as it may appear, the Government of India interceded on Tilak's behalf and succeeded in securing permission for him to visit Britain "provided he abstains from political agitation during his stay abroad and that no Home Rule or Congress delegate or other political supporter accompanies him". The underlying reason of this gesture was that the Government considered Tilak to be more dangerous in India than in Britain, where he would be "little more than a pebble on the beach".

Tilak sailed for Britain on September 24, 1918, accompanied by R. P. Karandikar, V. G. Joshi and G. M. Namjoshi.

CHAPTER XVII

MISSION IN BRITAIN

TILAK'S libel suit against Sir Valentine Chirol involved him in vexatious litigation towards the end of his life just as the Tai Maharaj case had done in its prime. The alleged libel appeared in Chirol's book *Indian Unrest*, published in 1910, but the slanderous attacks were originally made in his dispatches to *The Times* when he toured India as its special correspondent. The book was only an amplification of these dispatches. Tilak's attention was drawn to the publication on his return from Mandalay and he made a reference to it in his very first public statement after release.

Chirol was not the first of the tribe of foreign newspapermen who visit India for some profitable muck-raking. During British times they were warmly received and helped by the Government, but Chirol seems to have obtained a more generous share of official patronage because his avowed mission was to prove that "it is impossible that we should ever concede to India the rights of self-government". To buttress that imperialist theme, he indulged in the vilification of Indian leaders and especially of Tilak whom he described as "the father of Indian unrest".

That epithet has since been hailed as the aptest eulogy of Tilak. We of the present generation might well wonder, therefore, why he should have taken Chirol's fulminations seriously and sought their redress in a British court of law in the evening of his life. He really could not have expected that the scales of justice would be held even when the Government itself had joined hands with Chirol as the defendant. It may be recalled how, years later, Gandhi dismissed Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* as "a drain-inspector's report" despite the vile personal attacks it contained.

Tilak was anxious to vindicate not only his own character but also the cause of Indian freedom. What he particularly objected to was Chirol's interpretation of his writings and speeches as incitement to political murders. Chirol held Tilak responsible in some way or other not only for the murder of Rand and Ayerst in Poona in 1897 but also for that of Jackson in Nasik in 1910 when Tilak was a prisoner in Mandalay. Chirol described the gymnastic societies started by Tilak as "juvenile bands of dacoits to swell the coffers of Swaraj", and considered his cow protection activities a direct provocation to the Muslims.

A formal notice was served on Chirol to withdraw the libellous statements on October 1, 1915. Failing a satisfactory reply, a complaint was filed at the King's Bench Division, London, which came up for hearing on January 29, 1919. Meanwhile, the machinery of the Government was geared to help Chirol, an I.C.S. officer being specially appointed to collect the necessary material for defence. How deeply the Government was involved in the case will be evident from the following guidance note prepared by the advisers of the Secretary of State for India:

"Sir Valentine Chirol is now the defendant in a libel case which, if successful, will not only mulct him in damages for the public service that he rendered, but it also will have the effect of rehabilitating the political character of Tilak, a result which will be a very serious political evil. We have, therefore, to consider not only that we are bound, in honour, not to leave Chirol in the lurch, but also that serious political disadvantage might result if Tilak won his action. These two considerations are both entitled to weight, but there is a third which is even stronger. It is inevitable that the trial will disclose that Chirol obtained the information, on which his book is based, from Government sources and consequently a successful suit by Tilak against him might quite possibly be a prelude to a further suit against Government charging them with publication of libellous matter."

A similar opinion was expressed by a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council :

"It might be very undesirable that it should come out at that trial that *Indian Unrest* was written under the aegis of the Bombay Government unless it was practically certain that the defence would succeed. If Tilak should happen to get a substantial verdict, this fact is likely to cause additional complications. Under these circumstances I think that we are not only bound, but should be well-advised to render Sir Valentine all legitimate assistance in our power in the fervent hope that his defence might be successful."

As in the Tai Maharaj case, the resources of the Government were marshalled against Tilak, thus compelling him to fight against heavy odds. The case was heard by Justice Darling and a special jury. Tilak's brief was held by Sir John Simon, while Chirol was defended by Sir Edward Carson. Six counts of libel were framed against Chirol. Sir John Simon's opening address lasted seven hours, after which his junior counsel examined Tilak. Carson's cross-examination of Tilak was the *piece de resistance* of the case. He was known as "the terror of the English Bar" and he subjected the plaintiff to a gruelling questioning for nearly fifteen hours. It was marked by several passages-at-arm in which Carson lost his temper more than once. He snorted : "The value of Tilak's character ! There would not be a coin in existence which would be the value of his character."

Such attacks could be said to be in keeping with his brief. But one expected an impartial attitude on the part of the judge. Justice Darling, however, subordinated the personal libel to its political implications and his summing up to the jury was a grossly partisan performance. He regaled the jury with Aesop's fable of the trumpeter who begged the soldier who had caught him to spare his life on the ground that he was a non-combatant. The soldier refused saying that without the trumpeter's summons the enemy soldiers would not have advanced. "It was true", said the judge, "that Tilak had not singled out Jackson as he had singled out Rand for denunciation, but it was enough that he had created the atmosphere for the crime by stirring up hatred of officials generally. Was it unjust to say that he was the real author of the crime just as Fagin was the real author of the crimes committed by his pupils?"

After such a charge the jury did not take more than twenty-five minutes to return a verdict in favour of the defendant. Tilak had lost the case on which he had staked so much. The idea of going in appeal to the Privy Council was dropped on the advice of Sir John Simon. Tilak's attempt to vindicate his character in a British court of law only saddled him with a crippling financial burden as he had to pay the expenses of the defendant also. But this disaster, which would have broken a lesser spirit, did not unduly upset him. He wrote to Khaparde on March 27 :

"We must take our reverses calmly. There is no help. It was a game. If we had succeeded, it would have given us some advantage not in private life but in our public contest with the bureaucracy. We have failed, not through any fault or mistake of ours but through the incapacity of the British Judge and jury to distinguish between personal character and political opinions of a man. But this is, on its face, an eye-opener to our people, and let us now utilise it as such. So you see that any way we gain provided we are not disheartened."

Tilak wrote in a similar vein to his nephew Dhondopant Vidwans : "Do not worry about me. I have gone through worse calamities than this one. I would never have been alive today if I had succumbed to them. I will get over this as I did the others. Tell all my people that the verdict of the Court has not affected my health or my work in the least. As a matter of fact, I am waiting for the Home Rule League deputation to arrive here so as to start our propaganda in this country."

If the Government hoped that the verdict would affect Tilak's prestige and popularity among his countrymen it was quickly disillusioned. Rabindranath Tagore put the issue in a nutshell when he observed: "You do not purify the sacrificial fire or the sacred waters of the Ganges."

While presiding over a meeting in Bombay to collect funds for defraying Tilak's expenses Gandhi said: "As a matter of fact, Tilak has risen higher than ever in the people's esteem because of the adverse verdict. The fact is that the longer purse has won. One must admire the Lokamanya's tenacity and courage. Undaunted by the legal defeat he is carrying on national work in England. When he is engaged in fighting our battles over there, it is our duty here to collect funds and relieve him of the financial worry."

The very fact that Tilak stayed in England for eight months after he had lost the case shows that he had a larger mission in view. It was to win friends and influence opinion in favour of India. He was a firm believer in the value of international propaganda as a lever for political progress. He told Vithalbhai Patel:

"Our salvation will not come from outside. I have no delusions on that score. But I do believe that a favourable opinion of the civilised world towards Indian aspirations is a valuable asset in our struggle for freedom. We cannot afford to neglect world opinion except at our peril. Every important country has its national organisation and its bureaux in important world centres. And if mighty Governments do that, how much more necessary it is for a country like ours."

After getting the restrictions on his public activities removed, Tilak devoted himself to delivering lectures, participating in conferences, publishing pamphlets (the most notable being *Self-Determination for India*) and establishing contacts especially in the Labour Party. Thus we see Tilak addressing a meeting at the Caxton Hall within four days of losing his suit. He observed:

"The time has now come for India to enjoy the benefits of freedom and liberty. The Allies are enunciating throughout the world the principles of self-determination and democracy. I say, let Great Britain make a start in its own Empire. I am called anti-British and seditionist, which is quite untrue. I am opposed to tyranny and oppression but I am not hostile to Britain and the British people. I will go one step further and say that I am as staunch a Britisher as anyone here—in some respects a much better Britisher—as I am putting into practice the teachings of British democracy and freedom. I am up against all forms of tyranny anywhere in the world and I hope that all right-minded Britons and the British democracy will listen to my appeal and help me to achieve the emancipation and liberation of my country."

This was to be the burden of Tilak's speeches in Britain during the next eight months and he lost no opportunity of cultivating public opinion. He was frequently found on the same platform with Labour Party leaders and he made a handsome donation to the fund opened to convert its organ, the weekly *Herald,* into a daily newspaper. He was in constant touch with Ramsay MacDonald. Sidney Webb and George Lansbury, the last of whom was most impressed by Tilak's "transparent sincerity". It would not be far-fetched to suggest that the close contacts which Tilak established with the British Labour Party at the end of the First World War in no small way influenced that Party's subsequent attitude towards this country.

Another task that Tilak took in hand was the reorganisation of the British India Committee and *India,* which was supposed to be the organ of the Indian National Congress but which was ventilating its own independent views that were at times directly contrary to those of the Congress. This was done in the teeth of the opposition of vested interests and it is interesting to recall that N. C. Kelkar worked for some time as the editor of *India.* Kelkar, who used to contribute "London Newsletter" to the *Kesari,* has left a lively description of Tilak's life in London:

"It was unique in many ways. He lived there for nearly thirteen months but hardly ever went to the picture galleries, the zoo, or the many famous buildings or monuments of which London is justly proud. The only exceptions he made to this were the British Museum, the India Office Library and the House of Commons. Indeed, he was a rare specimen of traveller, for he did not do London from the tourist point of view."

Some misgivings were entertained regarding Tilak's ability to adapt himself to life in Britain, but, on the whole, he did it admirably. For the first ten months in London he lived at No. 10, Howley Place, Maida Vale, and later at 60, Talbot Road, Paddington, placed at his disposal by its Indian owner. The latter place is now converted into a monument to Tilak, serving as a hostel and assembly hall for Indian students. Except for the change in his dress, he followed his usual habits and routine. He would leave home after lunch for his engagements and return by 5 p.m. to receive visitors. He retired early. Moving about in the heavy traffic of London was a daily trial for Tilak in view of his age and health, but he never missed his appointments. His thirteen months in London were fully occupied with a variety of activities. The numerous contacts he established enabled him to gain a better appreciation of British political life as also a wider international perspective.

An important assignment was Tilak's appearance on behalf of the Indian Home Rule League before the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee, set up to consider the Government of India Bill. Tilak was also appointed by the Congress to lead a delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris. But he was refused a passport to France and all he could do was to send a memorandum to the President of the Peace Conference:

"Firstly, to concede to India the same right of representation on the League of Nations that is accorded to the

British Dominions, and secondly, to declare that Indians are quite capable of governing themselves, that as a progressive nation they are entitled to the application of the principle of self-determination and that in the exercise of the principle they are also entitled to determine the form of government founded on accepted democratic lines, which they deem most suitable for self-development according to the genius of the people."

All these activities involved Tilak in "one mad rush" (in the words of Joseph Baptista) and he must have been glad to sail back home on November 6, 1919, though not without a thought of returning some day to Britain's hospitable shores.

CHAPTER XVIII

LAST DAYS

MOMENTOUS developments had taken place in India during Tilak's absence of fourteen months. The nation had passed through as severe a traumatic experience as in 1857. But if the Great Revolt only strengthened British rule over India, the reign of blood and iron in the Punjab in 1919 gave it a jolt from which it was never to recover. The Punjab atrocities culminating in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre marked a turning-point in Indo-British relations.

This period also marked the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the political firmament. He had already proved the efficacy of Satyagraha in Champaran and Kheda. But the grievances there were purely local and their redress did not involve much loss of face to the Government. When Gandhi decided to protest against the Rowlatt Bills by a *hartal* on March 30, 1919—the date was subsequently changed to April 6—Satyagraha was for the first time projected on a national plane. The idea of protesting against the Bills, which he described as "an unmistakable symptom of a deep-seated disease in the governing body", in this manner first came to him in a dream at Madras. It was quickly translated into action and history was made when a *hartal* was observed all over the country on April 6 as a prelude to the Satyagraha movement. Unfortunately, Gandhi's injunction to observe strict non-violence was not uniformly observed and the exuberance of the people took a rowdy turn in a number of places.

Actually, Delhi observed the *hartal* on March 30 as directed earlier. It was the shooting and killing by the police and the military there while dispersing a mammoth procession led by Swami Shraddhanand, which precipitated the frightful happenings in the Punjab. The most ghastly tragedy was enacted in the Jallianwala Bagh at Amritsar on April 13, in which 379 persons were killed and 1,200 wounded, the unofficial estimate being much higher. This was followed by the promulgation of Martial Law in which sadism found full vent.

A gasp of horror and indignation was audible throughout the length and breadth of the country when news of the atrocities in the Punjab trickled through the rigid censorship. Although these gruesome events were not connected with the Satyagraha movement, the violence of the people elsewhere prevailed upon Gandhi to suspend the movement on April 18. Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood on May 30 for "giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen surprised to a dumb anguish of terror". Numerous similar protests were made. The situation was scarcely improved by the appointment of the Hunter Committee of Inquiry in an arbitrary manner. That it was essentially meant for whitewashing was evident from the Indemnity Act, which was hurriedly passed to save the guilty officials from punishment.

The entire country was seething with discontent and indignation as Tilak landed in Bombay on November 27, 1919, and sensed the change that had come over the nation during his fourteen months' absence. He had kept himself in close touch with the developments in the country as the manifesto on the Indian situation issued in London by the delegates of the Indian National Congress to England and the British Committee of the Congress shows. "I wish I had been in Bombay" Tilak said on arrival, "when Gandhi began Satyagraha. I would have borne difficulties with him and undergone the hardships."

The tumultuous welcome extended to Tilak in Bombay, Poona and elsewhere showed that his failure in the Chirol case had in no way affected his popularity. "Who cares what the British jury and judge said about our beloved Lokamanya ?"—wrote *The Bombay Chronicle*. "Their pronouncements are powerless to dethrone him from the loving hearts of the people." The most important assignment awaiting Tilak on his return was the Amritsar session of the Congress, which was to formulate its attitude to the Montford Reforms. Before proceeding to Amritsar Tilak visited Madras. Notable among the many addresses he received there was one from the Madras Presidency Association, which was predominantly a party of non-Brahmins founded under official auspices two years earlier as a counterweight to the Home Rule League. That after hailing Tilak as the foremost national leader, such a body should deplore "the many fissiparous tendencies such as the growing communal rivalries and political factions, which came in the way of our country's liberation" was significant.

News of the passing of the Reform Bill in Parliament and of the Royal Proclamation granting an amnesty to political offenders and calling on the people of India to co-operate in working the new reforms was received while Tilak was travelling from Madras to Amritsar. From an intermediate station he sent to the Viceroy the famous telegram requesting him to convey "to his Majesty grateful and loyal thanks of the Indian Home Rule League and the people of India for proclamation and amnesty and to assure him of responsive co-operation". The last two words created something of a storm, critics charging Tilak with the intention of wrecking the reforms.

Though the phrase was coined on the spur of the moment, the spirit of "responsive co-operation" had always guided Tilak's actions. In fact, as a political realist, it was his life-long motto "to accept whatever is given but to continue to agitate for more". He elaborated the meaning of responsive co-operation at Amritsar: "We are expected to co-operate; but first there must be something to co-operate over. Let the authorities declare in what way they are prepared to co-operate with us and we will assure them that if they co-operate we will surely reciprocate. Co-operation is not a one-way traffic; it is mutual, what I call responsive."

And this was what the Congress resolution on the Reforms ultimately boiled down to. While C. R. Das was an advocate of their outright rejection and Gandhi an apostle of their unconditional acceptance, Tilak stood midway between them. He agreed that the reforms did not come up to their expectations. Nevertheless, he wanted to utilise them for what they were worth. The Congress resolution, as finally passed, declared that the Reforms Act was "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing", called upon Parliament to take early steps to establish full responsible government in India in accordance with the principle of self-determination and asked the people "to so work the reforms as to secure an early establishment of full responsible government".

The Amritsar Congress was a triumph for Tilak's robust commonsense and pragmatic outlook. While he appreciated the moral stand of Gandhi and the indignant opposition of C. R. Das, he showed that their attitudes were not entirely incompatible, and the resolution, as finally passed, reflected both views in a balanced manner.

It was the implementation of this resolution to which Tilak devoted himself after his return from Amritsar. At the district conferences at Junnar and Belgaum and at the provincial conference at Sholapur, which was marked by rowdy scenes reminiscent of Surat, he mobilised public opinion with a view to preparing the country to fight the elections. He also undertook an extensive tour of Sind to explain the implications of the Amritsar Congress resolution.

While Tilak was thus engaged in preparing the country for responsive co-operation in working the reforms, a complete change had come over Gandhi, who had pleaded at Amritsar for unconditional co-operation. The main cause of this transformation was the publication of the terms of the Turkish Treaty which, by liquidating the Khilafat in defiance of solemn pledges, shocked and enraged the Muslims. Gandhi whole-heartedly associated himself with their feelings and placed before them a programme of non-co-operation. The publication of the Hunter Inquiry Committee report, which treated cold-blooded murders as "errors of judgment" and virtually exonerated their perpetrators, also influenced Gandhi's change of views. He came to the conclusion that a system of Government which could thus flout solemn pledges, as in the case of the Khilafat, and could condone the atrocities perpetrated in the Punjab could not be tolerated any longer.

In the statement Gandhi issued on the assumption of the presidentship of the All-India Home Rule League in April, he freely confessed that reforms took a secondary place in his scheme of national reorganisation. When the Peace Treaty presented by the Allies to Turkey was published on May 14, 1920, he declared that "co-operation in any shape or form, with this satanic Government is sinful". The Central Khilafat Committee adopted the non-co-operation resolution on May 28. But the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Banaras two days later, after hearing Gandhi's plea for following suit, considered that it was not within its competence to do so as the proposition was opposed to the Reforms resolution passed at Amritsar. It, therefore, referred the proposal to a special session of the Congress to be held later in Calcutta.

Tilak was present at Banaras, but he did not appear to have actively participated in the proceedings of the A.-I.C.C. While he sympathised with the Muslim sentiment over the Khilafat, he seemed to have entertained grave doubts about making a religious and extra-territorial issue a plank of the freedom struggle. His wisdom was vindicated when, under Kemal Pasha, the Turks themselves abolished the Khilafat and declared themselves a secular State. About the non-co-operation programme Tilak is reported to have told Gandhi:

"I like the programme well enough, but I have my doubts as to the country being with us in the self-denying ordinances which non-co-operation presents to the people. I will do nothing to hinder the progress of the movement. I wish you every success and if you gain the popular ear, you will find in me an enthusiastic supporter."

A more reliable clue to the working of Tilak's mind was provided by the manifesto of the Congress Democratic Party, established to implement the Amritsar resolution on the Reforms. The manifesto issued in the third week of April is important because it remains the last political will and testament of Tilak and bears comparison with a similar document left by Gokhale. The manifesto said:

"The Congress Democratic Party, as the name denotes, is a party animated by feelings of unswerving loyalty to the Congress and faith in democracy. It believes in the potency of democratic doctrines for the solution of Indian problems and regards the extension of education and political franchise as two of its best weapons. It advocates the removal of all civic, secular or social disabilities based on caste or custom. It believes in religious toleration, the sacredness of one's religion to oneself and the right and duty of the State to protect it against aggression. This party supports the claim of the Muslims for the solution of the Khilafat question according to Muslim dogmas and beliefs and the tenets of the *Koran*.

"The Congress Democratic Party believes in the integration or federation of India in the British Commonwealth for the advancement of the cause of humanity and the brotherhood of mankind, but demands autonomy for India and equal status as a sister-State with every partner in the British Commonwealth, including Great Britain. It insists upon equal citizenship for Indians throughout the Commonwealth and effective retaliation whenever it is denied. It welcomes the League of Nations as an instrument for enforcing the peace of the world, the integrity of States, the freedom and honour of nations and nationalities and for ending the exploitation of one country by another.

"The Congress Democratic Party proposes to work the Montagu Reforms Act for all it is worth and for accelerating the grant of full responsible government and, for this purpose, it will without hesitation offer co-operation or resort to constitutional opposition, whichever may be expedient and best calculated to give effect to the popular will."

Tilak had no intention of standing for the election himself. The ceaseless activity since his return from England had imposed a heavy strain on him and he observed: "I am really feeling that my powers of physical endurance are fast being sapped and I am not confident of taking up anything new that involves physical strain and does harm to my health." This remark suggests as if he had a premonition of his approaching end. On May 22, a pleasant interlude in Tilak's political preoccupations took place when a purse of Rs. 3,25,000 was presented to him in Poona to defray the expenses of the Chirol case. He was never so moved in his public career as when he rose to thank the people for their gesture of love. "By your generosity you have literally bought me body and soul", he said in a choked voice. "Plainly you want me to go on working for you and, of course, I have no option now."

Although the A.-I.C.C. had referred the non-co-operation programme to the special session of the Congress at Calcutta, Gandhi went ahead with its implementation. He wrote several articles in *Young India* to preach his gospel of love and suffering and they created tremendous enthusiasm in the country. The Muslims especially were getting restive and Gandhi announced on July 28 that the non-co-operation programme would be launched on August 1.

What attitude Tilak would have adopted towards the non-co-operation movement remains a matter of surmise and speculation. On the one hand, there is his reported assurance to Gandhi quoted earlier. On the other hand, there is the explicit provision in the manifesto of the Congress Democratic Party to work the Reforms Act for all it was worth. It must be remembered that though Gandhi had given the call for the non-co-operation movement to begin on August 1 it had yet to receive the *imprimatur* of the Congress. It would be fair to assume, therefore, that Tilak would neither have supported nor opposed Gandhi's programme until the special session of the Congress at Calcutta had pronounced its verdict on it. Gandhi's guarded observations on this subject in his autobiography support this view.

Tilak was not destined to attend the special Congress session. Early in July he suffered from an attack of malaria. Scarcely had he recovered from it when he had to proceed to Bombay in connection with an offshoot of the Tai Maharaj case, which was finally adjudged in his favour. On July 21 he caught a chill while out on a drive, which developed into a fever. His sixty-fourth birthday two days later was celebrated in bed. He felt slightly better that day and cheerfully observed that he would live five years longer. On July 26, however, the fever took a decidedly serious turn and complications began to set in.

Relatives and friends gathered by the bedside and the hotel where he was lying ill was besieged by huge crowds of anxious callers. From July 29 Tilak began to get attacks of *angina pectoris*. He passed into delirium but even his last incoherent utterances revolved round his political activities and the struggle for Swaraj. Despite the efforts of a roster of Bombay's most eminent doctors, which was in constant attendance on him, Tilak breathed his last at 12.40 a.m. on Sunday, August 1, 1920.

In the words of Nehru who was present in Bombay then, "the whole of Bombay's million population seemed to have poured out to do reverence to the great leader whom they had loved so well". It took five hours for the funeral procession to reach Chowpatty on the shores of the Arabian Sea, where special permission had been secured to cremate his remains—an honour extended to no other person. Tilak's statue stands there to remind succeeding generations of the duty they owe to the motherland.

There could be no better summing up of Tilak's life than the obituary tribute of Gandhi:

"It is difficult to believe of Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak as dead. He was so much part of the people. No man of our times had the hold on the masses that he had. The devotion that he commanded from thousands of his countrymen was extraordinary. He was unquestionably the idol of the people. His word was law among thousands. A giant among men has fallen. The voice of a lion is hushed. What was the reason of his hold on his countrymen? I think the answer is simple. His patriotism was a passion with him. He knew no religion but love of his country. He was a born democrat.

"He believed in the rule of the majority with an intensity that fairly frightened me. But that gave him his hold. He had an iron will which he used for his country. His life was an open book. His tastes were simple. His private life was spotlessly clean. He had dedicated his wonderful talents to the country. No man preached the gospel of Swaraj with the consistency and insistence of the Lokamanya.

"His countrymen, therefore, implicitly believed in him. He will go down to the generations yet unborn as a maker of modern India. They will revere his memory as of a man who lived for them and died for them."

CHAPTER XIX

BEHOLD THE MAN

TILAK'S photographs and portraits look surprisingly alike whether they were taken in the eighteen-nineties or twenty-five years later. He wore the same Maharashtrian garb from the Victorian to the Georgian times—the peaked red turban, the toga-like *angarkha* with an *uparani* (upper cloth) thrown over the shoulders, a *dhoti* and th Poona shoes. The colour, except of the turban and the shoes, was invariably white. While in England he wore a long coat buttoned at the neck and trousers but there, too, he stuck to his turban.

For a man born in Ratnagiri, Tilak was swarthy but his features were typical of its natives. His height and build were medium and his best weight never crossed the 140-pound mark. What distinguished him was his broad forehead and singularly luminous eyes. It was the eyes which gave his personality a magnetic quality. "If he came into a room and even though I had not seen him," wrote Dr. Harold H. Mann, Director of Agriculture to the Government of Bombay, "his presence became evident at once."

The apparel proclaims the man and Tilak's way of living was as simple as his dress. He had no special likes or dislikes in food and, in fact, he was rarely conscious of the taste of the dishes served to him. "I eat to live", he used to say and this became literally true when he had to take to a diabetic diet. He was, however, fond of tea, iced soda and *supari* (betel-nut) rarely doing without the last. His home also was sparsely appointed. It boasted of little furniture except a writing desk, cupboards packed with books and the favourite easy chair in which Tilak spent most of his time, usually without his shirt, reading, dictating and receiving his numerous visitors. He scarcely paid any social calls and rarely went out even for a stroll.

The only luxury Tilak allowed himself was a thatched cottage he built at Sinhgad to which he frequently retreated for rest, recuperation and the solace of solitude. Although Tilak was fond of company and, like Dr. Johnson, used to regale his friends with his loud talk and laughter, he felt the occasional need of going "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife". The thrilling historical associations of Sinhgad must have also been another attraction for him. He proudly acted as a tourist guide for his guests pointing out the spots where Shivaji's soldiers climbed the precipice at dead of night and his general, the brave Tanaji, fell fighting.

His family life was pitched on a simple key. It was a typical Brahmin household where the lady of the house did all the chores but kept herself in the background. Satyabhamabai was barely ten when she was married to Tilak. She bore him three sons and three daughters. The home was her world and the husband her god. While the members of the family were devoted to one another, formal discipline rather than demonstrative affection ruled their relations. Tilak rarely concerned himself with household affairs leaving them to his nephew Dhondopant Vidwans, whom he had brought up. And as his public activities increased, his private life diminished to that extent.

Tilak's personal life, to whose spotless purity even his enemies paid tribute, virtually merged into his public life. He would not have said, like Parnell, that his public life belonged to his country and that his private life was his own. It was Satyabhamabai who really paid the penalty for this fusion, but never did a word of complaint escape her lips. When Tilak became *Lokamanya*—the adored of the people—the unlettered and unsophisticated woman must have been bewildered rather than elated by the transformation it effected in their family life. From then on Tilak had to be frequently away from home for his political tours and conferences and she never recovered from the shock when he was sentenced to six years' transportation and deported to Mandalay.

Devotion to his friends and associates was a notable trait of Tilak's character. Though he himself laboured "as ever in my great Taskmaster's eye" he never set the same exacting standards for those around him. He was generous to their foibles and failings. It is an open secret that in both the sedition cases some of the articles for which he was sentenced were actually written by his colleagues. It was, of course, his editorial obligation to suffer their legal consequences, but he never grumbled about it, let alone bear a grudge against the erring assistants.

The Tai Maharaj case serves as a shining example of Tilak's loyalty to his friends. Some years before he was involved in it, he did a similar service to another friend of his college days. In 1894 Vasudeo Sadashiv Bapat, Assistant Commissioner of Survey Settlement of Baroda State, was charged with corruption and tried by a special commission. It was really a political case instigated by the British Resident to discredit the Maharaja's administration. Tilak spent the best part of a year helping Bapat, arranging his defence, collecting evidence and shielding him from spiteful superiors. There were many other such friends in need whom Tilak obliged at considerable personal sacrifice.

A typical instance was the promise he gave to one of his teachers, Shankar Moro Ranade, that he would look after his family. Ranade had left half-finished a novel whose royalty, his publisher thought, might provide some income to his wife and children. In an unguarded moment Tilak seems to have agreed to complete it. Thus we find the scholar and philosopher, whose spare moments were occupied with abstruse and philosophical subjects like the *Orion* and the *Chaldean Vedas,* toying with the idea of finishing a novel! He remembered it even at Mandalay and referred to it in one of his letters. The assignment, however, could not be carried out to the lasting regret of Tilak.

The fierce antagonism which Tilak evinced towards his political opponents was the obverse side of his devotion to his personal friends. Almost from the beginning of his public life Tilak was involved in bitter controversies over social and political issues. He conducted them with an ideological passion and dialectical virulence which were not witnessed before and have rarely been equalled since. The first person who was subjected to such a broadside was his close friend and colleague, Agarkar, who differed from Tilak on social issues, as we have seen.

No quarter was asked for or given in this war of words which reached a crescendo of fury when Agarkar started his *Sudharak*. The rapier of wit, the bludgeon of authority, the shield of argument, the thunderbolt of rhetoric—all were freely resorted to and the controversy at times even descended to the level of personal vituperation. Tilak revelled in this war, almost exulted in it, drawing upon all his rich intellectual resources and disputative faculties for attack, defence, and attack again.

And when the smell of the battlefield was in his nostrils Tilak spared nobody who stood in his path. Like Arjuna showering his arrows on the revered Drona and Bhishma, he crossed swords with Ranade and Bhandarkar on the "Age of Consent Bill" and other social issues. These elders reeled under the attack. They were staggered as much by its effrontery as by its force, while the spectators were struck dumb. It must be admitted that sometimes in the heat of battle Tilak transgressed the bounds of fair debate and hit below the belt. Even his loyal lieutenant and biographer, N. C. Kelkar, was appalled by the sheer malevolence of Tilak's attack on Ranade in the leading article in the *Kesari* on November 10, 1896, titled "Is This Childishness or Senility?" which was provoked by the establishment of the rival Deccan Sabha by Ranade after Tilak had captured the Sarvajanik Sabha.

The same vigour and aggression which marked Tilak's debates on social issues in his earlier life were brought to bear in a heightened degree on the later political controversies. The British rulers naturally got the full blast, but Moderates like Mehta, Gokhale and Banerjea and even Extremists like Annie Besant were not spared. Tilak was even accused by his enemies of having hastened the death of Gokhale by one of his articles on Congress unity. The charge was baseless and silly, but it reveals the fear he could strike in his opponents. The paradox of a man adored by the masses provoking so many personal enmities may be traced to Tilak's constant indulgence in controversy. So bitter was the hatred which pursued him that a certain Rao Bahadur, a follower of Ranade, openly declared during the controversy over the Poona Congress session that things would not work smoothly until Tilak was dead !

The controversies, of course, were not meant merely to score debating points. They served as a powerful medium of mass propaganda. The interest of the people could be kindled only by such public discussion and confrontation of the leading protagonists of both sides. Tilak was the first to utilise the Press and platform in this manner in Indian politics. This aspect of the controversies which punctuated Tilak's life must not be lost sight of. They no doubt produced much heat, but they also enlightened the public.

Truly could it be said of Tilak that the style was the man—blunt, rugged, aggressive. Not for him stylistic graces or emotional appeals. His writings were addressed to the intellect with a mastery of detail, incisive logic and ringing sincerity. Every sentence fell like the stroke of a hammer, every paragraph advanced the argument and the articles as a whole made a tremendous impact on the reader. Their very captions culled from his favourite Bhartrihari or *Mahabharata* gave a revealing clue to their contents.

"Imagine that you are speaking to a villager and not writing for university people", Tilak used to tell his editorial staff. "No Sanskrit quotations and no frightening statistics. Don't scare away the reader by quoting figures. Keep them to yourself. Make sure of your facts. What you say must be as clear as daylight and the meaning must never be obscure." His own articles were the best illustration of this precept but they had something plus which could not be imitated. Incidentally, Tilak was averse to writing with his own hand and always dictated his articles.

As in his writing, so in his speeches Tilak was simple and direct. There was nothing of the orator or demagogue about him, no high-sounding phrases, no impassioned appeals or flights or rhetoric. In this he was complete contrast to Gokhale with his persuasive tongue, rounded periods and purple patches. Tilak put every issue plainly and uncompromisingly, without any "ifs" or "buts". He demolished the position of his opponents and established his own in the light of reason and by the force of logic. It was the content of his speech and not the manner of its delivery which mattered. Tilak believed with Lord Morley that "political oratory is action, not words; action, character, will, purpose and personality".

Fierce as were the social and political debates that Tilak conducted throughout his life, he never dragged his opposition beyond the grave. "Do not say ill of the dead." was his motto and in the face of death all controversies were stilled. He was so overcome by Agarkar's death that he shed frequent tears while writing his obituary, it being the only occasion in his life when he succumbed to such weakness. Nothing could be more unstinted and generous than the tribute Tilak paid to Ranade after his demise. His funeral oration on Gokhale was equally marked by an unreserved homage. It was only on such occasions that emotion broke through the crust of his stern exterior. The readers of the *Kesari* were once startled by the obituary tribute paid to Brewin, a high police official, who was known to discharge his duties without fear or favour.

Tilak's life was a long cavalcade of civil suits and criminal prosecutions. He began his public life with the defamation case launched against him by Barve and virtually ended it with the Chirol case. In between were the three prosecutions for sedition, in one of which he was acquitted, the Tai Maharaj case which runs like a thread through his life; and the Bapat affair in which he marshalled the defence and briefed the counsel. In addition, there were three cases in which *The Hindu, The Times of India* and *The Globe* were respectively compelled to apologise to Tilak. This constant involvement gave Tilak full scope for the display of his legal knowledge and subtlety as also of the perseverance bordering on obstinacy which was his outstanding trait. He was a graduate of law and conducted a law class for nearly a decade but never practised as an advocate.

The masterly manner in which he conducted his defence in the second sedition case shows that he would have achieved immense professional success had he so cared. He amazed Pugh and Garth, the Calcutta barristers who defended him in the first sedition case, by the dispatch and skill with which he drafted in his prison cell a petition for leave to appeal to the Privy Council. "Their appreciation of Tilak's ability and intellect, which was already very high," according to their junior counsel J. Chaudhuri, "matured into great admiration and they said that during their professional experience, they had not come across any layman or even a lawyer who could draw up a petition of appeal so accurately and exhaustively after having only heard a charge or judgment delivered in court and without reference to any notes." Again, at Mandalay, without a single lawbook at his command, he drafted an exhaustive rejoinder to the Bombay High Court's judgment in the Tai Maharaj case, which bears a striking similarity to the final verdict of the Privy Council.

Despite this life-long preoccupation with politics and law, the natural bent of Tilak's mind was towards scholarly pursuits, Vedic research and philosophical speculation. He was deeply religious in the higher sense and a profound believer in the teaching of the *Gita* which set at rest all his spiritual doubts and quests. As Dr. Radhakrishnan said, "the field of politics to which Tilak devoted the best years of his life was not the one for which he was made. He was by nature a scholar and only by necessity a politician".

But the necessity was so overwhelming that nationalism became the consuming passion of his life. To it he subordinated all other desires, interests and ambitions and strove with might and main to achieve freedom. He had the knack of creating the most gigantic national movements out of the most trifling issues. During the temperance movement in Poona in 1907, for example, a police report recorded: "The British Raj has ceased to operate in Poona. The man whose authority rules the district is Tilak."

What was Tilak's attitude to violence? The question was much debated during the decade after his death. On the one hand, Tilak scrupulously eschewed violence from his political movement. All his public utterances counselled against the adoption of insurrectionary methods. Despite the closest investigation the Government was never able to establish any connection whatever between Tilak and the revolutionaries or the believers in the bomb.

On the other hand, there is a considerable mass of evidence which indicates that Tilak did take some sort of benevolent interest in the revolutionaries even though he always tried to dissuade them from their violent pursuits. That was because he knew that circumstanced and unarmed as India was, violence would only recoil and unleash a regime of naked terror. Tilak was not a votary of non-violence as Gandhi was. But he was convinced that in the prevailing conditions, violence would be worse than a crime. It would be a blunder. That was why, as a practical politician, he set his face against it without indulging in any ethical hair-splitting. After all, a nation has the inherent right to attain freedom by every possible means.

CHAPTER XX

TILAK, GOKHALE AND GANDHI

I

THE lives of Tilak and Gokhale bear a striking resemblance. Both were born in the Konkan but spent most of their years in Poona. Both began their careers as teachers, Gokhale being inspired to become a life-member of the Deccan Education Society by the example of Tilak, who was ten years his senior. Both made their first public appearance on the same platform. Both dedicated themselves to the service of the nation. Both were life-long Congressmen, Gokhale becoming its president in 1905, while the honour was offered to Tilak more than once though he never actually graced the Congress chair. Both achieved great fame and popularity and the names of both are enshrined in the national Valhalla.

This superficial similarity, however, only served as a foil to the fundamental differences that separated them. These spread over the entire gamut of personal temperament and outlook to political methods and ideals. Gokhale was gentle and sensitive; Tilak was self-willed and dogmatic. Gokhale was like the Ganges "in which one could have a refreshing bath"; Tilak was like the ocean, forbidding and unfathomable. Gokhale gloried in the discipleship of Ranade; Tilak called no man his *guru*. Gokhale would rather be wrong with Pherozeshah Mehta than right with himself; Tilak would like to be right only with what he conceived to be the right. Gokhale yearned for appreciation; to Tilak duty was its own reward. Gokhale (in the words of Sastri) was a tender creeper that must entwine itself round some stem; Tilak was a giant banyan throwing out numerous branches.

In politics Gokhale was a Moderate though he secretly hated that appellation. Tilak was an Extremist and proud of it. Gokhale wanted to spiritualise politics. Tilak considered that politics was a game of worldly people. Gokhale's first article of political faith was that the British connection was ordained "in the inscrutable dispensation of Providence" for India's good. Tilak mercilessly pilloried the Moderates for thus dragging in Providence to justify the British conquest of India. Gokhale believed in persuasion, appeal and protest. Tilak sought to inculcate self-respect, self-reliance and strength.

It was thus not surprising that Tilak and Gokhale should have found themselves in opposite camps from the very beginning of their public life. Their differences came to a head while both were members of the Deccan Education Society. It was the permission given to Gokhale to become the secretary of the Sarvajanik Sabha that served as the immediate provocation for Tilak's resignation from the Society. Later they were again divided on the issue of social reform. In a sense, it was Gokhale's leaving the Sarvajanik Sabha (which was captured by Tilak) and joining the Deccan Sabha (a rival body established by Ranade) which marked his final break with Tilak.

From then on Tilak and Gokhale were ranged against each other to the end of their days. And as Tilak's politics became more and more aggressive, Gokhale retired more and more into his Moderate shell. Gokhale found his métier in the cut, thrust and parry of parliamentary debate and his scintillating speeches in the Supreme Legislative Council still make rewarding reading. Tilak, on the other hand, realised that the emancipation of the nation could be achieved only by mass action. "Educate, agitate and organise" became his motto.

There is some reason to believe that Gokhale was something like an Extremist among the Moderates and that, left to himself, he would have gradually approximated to Tilak's position. Nothing could be more forthright, for example, than Gokhale's denunciation of Lord Curzon as

Aurangzeb or his spirited defence of boycott in his presidential speech at the Banaras Congress. Sir Valentine Chirol sharply criticised this performance: "It must have been a proud moment for Tilak when the very man who had often fought so courageously against his inflammatory methods and reactionary tendencies in the Deccan—Mr. Gokhale—played into his hands and from the presidential chair at Banaras got up to commend the boycott as a political weapon used for definite political purpose."

Gokhale was sensitive to such comments and to the reactions of Pherozeshah Mehta which, needless to say, were none too favourable to aberrations like this. It thus did not take long for him to return to his Moderate moorings. By the time of the following Calcutta Congress session his views on *swadeshi* and boycott had undergone a perceptible change. This provoked Tilak to write in the *Kesari* :

"Gokhale says that he does not belong to the new party. Moreover, it is well known that in the last Congress session his party accepted the resolution on *swadeshi* and boycott with great reluctance as a sort of compromise. The natural bent of his party is to maintain good relations with the British, to get certain things from the bureaucracy through the method of persuasive requests. After the last Congress session, however, they cannot keep this soft attitude. Vagueness about the ideals of the Congress and about *swadeshi* has got to be given up and an unequivocal stand taken... This is indeed a precarious position and we were eager to see how Mr. Gokhale would accomplish the feat of getting out of it. These curiosities of ours were satisfied when we read his speeches and we have been thoroughly disillusioned.

"Gokhale is not to be blamed for the contradiction in the views of his party. The contradiction is inherent in the ideology it professes. The more he tries to defend his side, the more conscious would he be of its weakness. If he tries to get over it, his ideology—if not his actions—would coincide with that of the new party."

We have already seen the equivocal part played by Gokhale in drafting the resolutions of the Surat Congress and the unconvincing reasons he gave for effecting the vital changes in them. It may be conceded that this was done at the behest of Mehta, Banerjea and Ghose and that Gokhale agreed to go back to the Calcutta resolutions when he saw the furore caused by the unauthorised alterations. But by then the mischief was done and the Congress was split. If there was any man in the Moderate camp who deplored the tragic development, it was Gokhale.

Within seven months of the Surat Congress, Tilak was convicted of sedition. Gokhale was then in England and he was shocked by the sentence passed on him. He was shrewd enough to realise that "the conviction and sentence will really be a great blow to our party, for part of the resentment against the Government is likely to be directed against us". Gokhale's apprehension was justified because somehow an impression had gained that he was responsible for Tilak's imprisonment. The situation did not improve by his refusal to attend a meeting held in London to protest against Tilak's imprisonment and a plot was set afoot by some hotheads to assassinate Gokhale for his "treachery". Some Indian newspapers also indulged in uncharitable attacks on him. Gokhale wrote in pain to his colleague A. V. Patwardhan on December 2, 1908 :

"Such attacks are particularly cowardly and detestable in this instance because they are made against an absent man and in the present state of inflamed feeling in India they are wickedly suggestive. But the malevolence of those men is not new. It has pursued me for years past with a virulence which I alone knew and which at one time used to cause me great mental distress but now does not affect me much."

Nevertheless, Gokhale sued some of the papers for libel and obtained damages which were passed on to charity. He seems to have believed that Tilak would be brought back and set free after things had quietened. This expectation was belied despite Gokhale's personal appeals to Lord Morley and the Governor of Bombay and it was only after the completion of his full term that Tilak was released in June 1914. By then Gokhale was a dying man—and he knew it. He was keenly responsive to Tilak's efforts for Congress unity despite the cold water thrown on them by Pherozeshah Mehta, as we have noted in an earlier chapter. Just a fortnight before his death he asked S. S. Setlur to try to arrive at a compromise with Tilak on the lines laid down by Mrs. Besant:

"I know that there is not the slightest doubt that he (Tilak) will capture the Congress, sooner or later. That cannot be helped. Do put my proposal before the more reasonable men of his party and get him to accept it. Whatever may happen in future, let me go with the satisfaction that the Congress split has come to an end."

That was not to be, however, and Gokhale passed away on February 19, 1915. Both Gokhale and Tilak played their parts truly and well and it is futile to speculate what they could have achieved together. Despite their life-long conflict both had respect for each other's sterling patriotism and superlative abilities. When Gokhale returned from England after his able advocacy of India's cause as a member of the Congress deputation in 1905, Tilak took the lead in arranging a public reception for him in Poona. When he received the news of Gokhale's death, he immediately rushed to Poona from Sinhgad, to pay a funeral tribute. In his obituary in the *Kesari* he said :

"People praise Gokhale for many diverse qualities that he had such as his intellect, his assiduous industry or his gentleness. These, in my opinion, are merely external and there can be a difference of opinion about them. But there can be no difference of opinion whatsoever about the inner spring that helped the growth of these qualities. The mainspring of his life was his selfless dedication to the cause of the country. No one thinks much of those who take up public service after enjoying the pleasures of life and amassing a fortune. But when one comes across a man who deliberately turns his back on such alluring worldly prospects on the very threshold of life and keeps up his resolve through thick and thin, he deserves our respect. Such a man is indeed thrice blessed and such was Gokhale."

Gokhale also had deep and genuine respect for Tilak. Srinivasa Sastri tells how he would not allow anybody to criticise Tilak personally in his hearing. He would say: "Tilak may have his faults. I have many accounts to settle with him. But who are you? You are nowhere near him. He is a great man. His natural endowments are first-rate. He has improved them for the service of the country. Although I do not approve of his methods, I never question his motives. Believe me, there is no man who has spent so much for the country; there is no man who had in his life to contend against the powerful opposition of the Government so much as Tilak; there is no man who has shown grit and patience and courage so rare that several times, in the course of his struggles, he lost his fortune and by his indomitable will put it all together."

Tilak and Gokhale were divided not so much by political exigencies as ideological imperatives. They seemed to move in different orbits but, in essence, their roles were complementary. Each strengthened the other's hands. In those days constitutional efforts were as necessary for furthering the cause of the country as political agitation. Like Dadabhai Naoroji, Gokhale was in no small degree responsible for rousing the conscience of Britain for the wrongs done to India. His natural urbanity and sweet reasonableness appealed to all shades of British opinion and won the respect of as diverse personalities as Lord Curzon and Lord Morley. During his seven visits to Britain he spared no efforts to create a favourable climate for India. He spent himself utterly in the service of the country. He might not have suffered imprisonment, but he had to drink the cup of humiliation and obloquy to the dregs more than once. Gokhale was a true Servant of India, a Builder of the Nation, if ever there was one.

II

"Gokhale seemed to me", said Gandhi, "all I wanted in a political worker—pure as crystal, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion and chivalrous to a fault". And it is not surprising that it was Gokhale to whom he turned immediately after his final return from South Africa in December 1914. What direction Gandhi's career would have taken had Gokhale not died within two months of his return is an imponderable of Indian history. It is equally another imponderable what attitude Tilak would have adopted at the Calcutta Congress towards the fateful resolution of non-co-operation, which ushered in the Gandhi era had he not passed away a month earlier.

It is well known that Gandhi was anxious to join the Servants of India Society and that Gokhale possibly looked upon him as his successor. The doubts of the members of the Society about his acceptability prevented that consummation and left him free to chart his own course. For though Gandhi toured the country and met a number of people without taking active part in politics during the next twelve months, as enjoined by Gokhale, he thenceforth followed his own instinct and intuition. During this period he also spent a few days with Tilak at Sinhgad.

Gandhi hailed Gokhale as his political *guru,* but that relationship was purely "a personal matter" It had no bearing on Gandhi's political development although he then shared Gokhale's views on India's place in the British Empire. In fact, in the King's birthday honours list in June 1915, he received the Kaisar-i-Hind Medal for his services to the British Empire. He remained true to his master's memory and did not gravitate. towards Tilak despite his respect for him which bordered on veneration.

In 1921 Gandhi denied the soft impeachment that he had taken up a cause that was dearest to Tilak's heart though he called himself Gokhale's disciple. "I cannot claim the honour of being a follower of Tilak", Gandhi wrote. "In all humility I claim to deliver his message to the country as truly as the best of his disciples. But I am conscious that my method is not Tilak's method."

In view of this express repudiation to say that it was Tilak's mantle that fell on Gandhi, not Gokhale's, as some political commentators have done, is to indulge in a myth. Neither Tilak nor Gandhi wore anybody's mantle. Like Napoleon picking the crown with his sword, they assumed national leadership with their own *élan* and effort. It is only an academic pursuit to search for similarity and continuity between the politics of Tilak and Gandhi. Each followed his own light.

Unlike Gokhale and Tilak, whose lives ran on parallel lines for nearly thirty years, Tilak and Gandhi worked simultaneously only for five and a half years, during thirteen months of which the former was away in England for the Chirol case. Even in these four and half years they came together only at the Congress sessions at Lucknow (1916), Calcutta (1917) and Amritsar (1919) and on a few other platforms. Both could not attend the Delhi Congress (1918). Tilak was the dominating figure at the Lucknow Congress and he went out of his way to find a seat for Gandhi on its subjects committee. At the Calcutta and Amritsar sessions, too, Tilak was the most prominent in the public eye, but the cry of *Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai* had begun to ring the welkin at the latter place.

It was not through the Congress organisation, however, that Gandhi emerged on the Indian political scene. What led him there were the victories he scored successively at Viramgam, Champaran, Kheda and Ahmedabad by the new weapon of Satyagraha. It was the amazing response to his call for *hartal* to protest against the Rowlatt Acts that projected him into national leadership. Here was a

Messiah talking, in strange accents of truth, love, non-violence, voluntary suffering and soul-force, writing to the Viceroy as to an equal, chastising the people for their misdemeanour, confessing to "Himalayan blunders" and getting away with it all. Nothing like this was heard and seen in Indian politics before.

And while Gandhi was thus engaged in his first non-violent skirmishes with the British Government, he was simultaneously acting as its recruiting sergeant! He wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, in May, 1918, after the Delhi war conference, to which Tilak was not invited: "If I could make my countrymen retrace their steps, I would make them withdraw all the Congress resolutions and not whisper 'Home Rule' or 'Responsible Government' during the pendency of the war. I would make India offer all her able-bodied sons as a sacrifice to the British Empire at its critical moment . . . I write this because I love the English nation and I wish to evoke in every Indian the loyalty of Englishmen."

This gush of loyalty must have flabbergasted Tilak who, too, had offered to help the recruiting campaign but strictly on a *quid pro quo* basis. He was familiar with similar professions of Moderates but Gandhi's letter had a new ring, a compelling earnestness whose significance could not be denied. For, in that very letter Gandhi wrote: "You have appealed to us to sink domestic differences. If this appeal involves the toleration of tyranny and wrong-doing on the part of officials, I am powerless to respond. I shall resist organised tyranny to the uttermost. The appeal must be to the officials that they do not ill-treat a single soul and that they consult and respect popular opinion as never before."

What was Tilak's reaction to the Mahatma? He was too great to view Gandhi as a possible rival; too astute not to realise the immense potentialities of the new political technique evolved by him; too seasoned to overlook the perils that lay in its application. Fortunately, Tilak's considered views on Gandhi's philosophy are available in the preface he wrote to Mrs. Avantikabai Gokhale's biography of Gandhi in 1918. It reveals not only genuine appreciation but a penetrating insight since what was later known as Gandhism was yet in its formative stage. Tilak wrote towards the end about Gandhi's way of passive resistance:

"It is naturally considered unlawful to rebel against the laws or disobey the orders issued by the Government officers because the laws are made to preserve peace and order. Immense difficulties will have to be faced by a patriot who is anxious to bring about necessary reform. He realises that to disobey laws is not proper and he finds himself in a peculiar predicament. Gandhi devised the way of passive resistance when placed in such a situation. Thus passive resistance, obstruction or Satyagraha, as he terms it, is discovered by him and he has sanctified it by his penance.

"It is difficult to say whether it could be offered on all occasions, even if justifiable, or whether it will be effective everywhere. But everyone will have to admit that it has very great possibilities. There are always penalties prescribed for the breach of every law in order to compel the subjects to conform to it. But when a law itself is immoral and is sought to be enforced by the Governmental authority it becomes necessary to test our faith in truth, justice and *dharma* and defy the immoral law.

"People wedded to truth and justice say that it is perfectly legitimate to disobey such laws as a duty, a religious duty. But faith and devotion to truth and justice have got to be of such a high degree or fervour that no other consideration but performance of duty must enter the mind of the devotee and the faithful. Doing duty in spite of everything is the only sentiment that must take his complete possession. This is what is called moral courage, truthfulness, character. This virtue is not attainable by learning and scholarship. Birth or social station is no condition of its attainment nor can high intellectual powers achieve it.

"This is spiritual power. This is the teaching of the *Upanishads.* Although this spiritual power cannot be attained by learning or intellect, a determined man can attain it by practice of penance according to the *Gita.* That the lives of great men and noble men are useful to build our character is due to this. Gandhi's life is such a life and I heartily recommend that it should be studied from this point of view to build one's moral strength and spiritual power."

It may be recalled that Tilak himself had advocated passive resistance as long ago as 1905 during the Bengal partition. But he gives the credit of its discovery to Gandhi. What Tilak had in mind was a purely political weapon. What Gandhi had devised and practised in South Africa had a deeper significance. In the same manner, although Gokhale was the first to talk of "spiritualising politics", it was Gandhi who adopted it in practice and made his own life its illustration.

Such was the gist of Tilak's interpretation of "Gandhi's way of passive resistance" which, as he observed, stemmed from the teaching of the *Upanishads.* There has been no apter analysis. It must be added that Tilak entertained doubts about the practical utility of Satyagraha. However he might have appreciated it from the spiritual point of view, he could not embrace it as a politician. To Tilak politics was in essence war just as to Clausewitz war was an extension of politics. A war cannot be fought from fixed positions. One must base one's strategy on the available means and resources and adapt one's tactics to its shifting fortunes. Even a retreat must serve as a preliminary to an advance if one is to win.

Gandhi differed fundamentally from this materialistic and pragmatic view of politics. His politics were subservient to his religion. "You must understand", he said, "that I cannot isolate politics from the deepest things of my life;

they are inextricably bound up with non-violence and truth." Even his patriotism was identical with humanity: "I am patriotic because I am human and humane." Gandhi knew that Tilak did not share these views. But he did an unwitting injustice when he wrote in the *Young India,* during the course of his comments on the compromise resolution on the Reforms Act passed by the Amritsar Congress, that Tilak considered that everything was fair in love and war.

Tilak sharply reacted to this incorrect presentation of his views. He sent the following reply on January 28, 1920:

"I am sorry to say that in your article on the Reform Resolution in *Young India* you represented me as holding that I considered everything fair in politics. I write this to say that my view is not correctly represented therein. Politics is a game of worldly people and not of *sadhus* and instead of the maxim *Akkodhen jine kodham* (conquer anger by non-anger) as preached by Buddha, I prefer to rely on the maxim of Shri Krishna *Ye yatha maam prapadyante taanstathaiva bhajamyaham* (I give to them reward in the same manner and to the same extent that they worship me). That explains the whole difference and also the meaning of my phrase 'responsive co-operation'. Both methods are equally honest and righteous. But the one is more suited to this world than the other. Any further explanation about the difference will be found in my *Gita-Rahasya.*"

This was Tilak's consistent attitude to politics. But this letter is important because it is his last and conclusive statement on the subject. It logically follows, therefore, that Tilak would not have departed from this life-long principle and practice in the evening of his life. It does not necessarily imply that he would have opposed Gandhi's policy and programme. Apart from Tilak's high personal regard for him, Swaraj would not have been the less welcome to him if it could be won through the latter's methods. But it is arguable whether he would have blindly accepted all the tenets and postulates of the non-co-operation programme placed by Gandhi before the Calcutta Congress. Although Gandhi hoped to receive encouragement and inspiration from Tilak, he admitted in his autobiography that "what his attitude would have been with regard to the final phase of non-co-operation will always be a matter of speculation".

Tilak would have readily accepted the dynamic aspects of the programme like *swadeshi,* boycott and national education, which he himself had first placed before the nation fifteen years earlier. But he would have strongly demurred to the boycott of legislative councils. He was committed "to work the Reforms Act for all it was worth", as mentioned in the manifesto of the Congress Democratic Party founded by him. How vulnerable Gandhi's position was on this issue was proved within three years when, at the instance of C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru, the Swaraj Party was formed to capture the Councils. But all this is idle speculation. Providence which guides the destinies of nations as of individuals removed Tilak from the mortal scene on August 1, 1920, and an era ended in modern Indian history.

III

Born a year before the "war of independence", Tilak died twenty-seven years before India became free. His life thus spans the major part of our struggle for freedom, the part which, like an iceberg, is hidden from the public view. It was Tilak who first made his countrymen conscious of their slavery and created in them the urge for freedom. Chirol called him the father of Indian unrest. But Tilak did much more than germinate unrest in the minds of his countrymen. He made it vocal; he gave it shape; he directed it into constructive channels.

When Tilak appeared on the scene, Indian politics was a diversion of the leisured classes. When he left it, it was broad-based on the participation of the common people.

As early as 1896 Tilak wrote: "There is no greater folly than the assumption of the educated classes that they are separate from the mass of the people. They must realise that they are part and parcel of the whole—the Indian masses. Their own salvation depends on the salvation of the people."

Tilak made people realise that nothing could be achieved without discipline, unity and strenuous efforts. He did not merely coin the slogan "Swaraj is my birth-right and I will have it". He blazed the trail for it through life-long struggle and sacrifice, through persecution and imprisonment, through dynamic and multifarious activity. He was the first to rouse and mobilise public opinion for national ends.

And yet Tilak was as removed from the popular conception of a politician as was Gandhi. His early love was education and he used to say that in a free India he would become a professor of mathematics. He was a scholar and thinker, a philosopher who delved into the reality of things. The *Gita-Rahasya* will for ever remain a monument to his scholarship. But he did not merely comment on the *Gita;* he lived it. He was a *sthitaprajna*—one who has attained absolute equanimity.

Freedom from British rule was the ruling passion of Tilak's life. To it he devoted all his matchless gifts and abilities, all the thoughts of his waking hours. By his supreme dedication and unyielding will he laid the foundation of India's freedom without which Gandhi could not have raised the edifice. As Mahatma Gandhi is the Father of the Nation, so is Lokamanya Tilak the Father of Indian Nationalism.

APPENDIX

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan observes in *Eminent Orientalists*: "Tilak's literary work is not the traditional distraction of an unemployed statesman. His natural aptitude had been in the direction of oriental studies and so we find in his work, instead of the discursiveness of the amateur, the solid learning and the keen insight of a trained scholar." The domain of Tilak's scholarship was Vedic research and Hindu philosophy. Except for a few other stray pieces, Tilak's principal works are *The Orion* (published in 1893), *The Arctic Home in the Vedas* (1903) and the *Gita-Rahasya* (1915). Passing reference has already been made to these books—each of which broke new ground—in earlier pages. Those who are interested in their subject-matter cannot do better than study them first-hand. For the general reader their arguments are presented here in Tilak's own words.

The Orion

"As I was reading the *Bhagavad-Gita,* it occurred to me that we might derive important conclusions from the statement that He was Margashirsha of the months. This led me to inquire into the primitive Vedic calendar . . . The high antiquity of the Egyptian civilisation is now generally admitted. But scholars still hesitate to place the commencement of the Vedic civilisation earlier than 2,400 B.C. I have endeavoured to show that the traditions recorded in the *Rigveda* unmistakably point to a period not later than 4,000 B.C., when the vernal equinox was in Orion or, in other words, when the Dog-star (or the Dog as we have in the *Rigveda*) commenced the equinoctical year. Many of the Vedic texts and legends have been cited in this connection and intelligently explained for the first time, thus throwing a considerable light on the legends and rites in later Sanskrit works. I have further tried to show how these legends are strikingly corroborated by the legends and traditions of Iran and Greece.

"The oldest period in the Aryan civilisation may be called the Aditi or the pre-Orion period and we may roughly assign 6,000—4,000 B.C. as its limits. The Orion period, roughly speaking, extended from 4,000 B.C. to 2,500 B.C., from the time when the vernal equinox was in the asterism of Ardra to the time when it receded to the asterism of the Krithikas. This is the most important period in the history of the Aryan civilisation.

"The third or the Krithika period commences with the vernal equinox in the asterism of the Krithikas and extends up to the period recorded in the *Vedang Jyotisha,* that is from 2,500 B.C. to 1,400 B.C. It was the period of the *Taittiriya Samhita* and several of the *Brahmanas.* The fourth and the last period of the old Sanskrit literature extends from 1,400 B.C. to 500 B.C. or to the birth and rise of Buddhism. It was the period of the *Sutras* and the philosophical systems. It may be called the real pre-Buddhistic period."

(*from the Preface*)

THE ARCTIC HOME IN THE VEDAS

"The present volume is a sequel to *The Orion* or *Researches Into the Antiquity of the Vedas.*

"The beginnings of Aryan civilisation must be supposed to date back several thousand years before the oldest Vedic period; and when the commencement of the post-glacial epoch is brought down to 8,000 B.C., it is not at all surprising if the date of primitive Aryan life is found to go back to it from 4,500 B.C., the age of the oldest Vedic period. In fact, it is the main point sought to be established in the present volume. There are many passages in the *Rigveda,* which, though hitherto looked upon as obscure and unintelligible, do, when interpreted in the light of recent scientific researches, plainly disclose the Polar attributes of the Vedic deities, or the traces of an ancient Arctic calendar; while the *Avesta* expressly tells us that the happy land of Airyana Vaejo, or the Aryan Paradise, was located in a region where the sun shone but once a year, and that it was destroyed by the invasion of snow and ice, which rendered its climate inclement and necessitated a migration southward. These are plain and simple statements, and when we put them side by side with what we know of the glacial and the post-glacial epoch from the latest geological researches, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the primitive Aryan home was both Arctic and interglacial.

"Several scientific men have already declared their belief that the original home of man must be sought for in the Arctic region. Even on strict philological grounds the theory of a primitive Aryan home in Central Asia has been now almost abandoned in favour of North Germany or Scandinavia. Prof Rhys is led to suggest "some spot within the Arctic circle" on purely mythological considerations. I go only a step further and show that the theory, so far as the primitive Aryan home is concerned, is fully borne out by Vedic and Avestic traditions and what is still more important, the latest geological researches not only corroborate the Avestic description of the destruction of the Aryan Paradise but enable us to place its existence in times before the last glacial epoch."

(*from the. Preface & Concluding Chapter*)

GITA-RAHASYA

"When I was quite a boy, I was often told by my elders that strictly religious and philosophic life was incompatible with the humdrum life of every day. If one was ambitious enough to try to attain *moksha*, the highest goal a person could attain, then he must divest himself of all earthly desires and renounce this world. One could not serve two masters, the world and God. I understood this to mean that if one would lead a life which was the life worth living, according to the religion in which I was born, then the sooner the world was given up the better.

"This set me thinking. The question that I formulated for myself was : Does my religion want me to give up this world and renounce it before I attempt to, or in order to be able to, attain the perfection of manhood? In my boyhood I was also told that *Bhagavad-Gita* was universally acknowledged to be a book containing all the principles and philosophy of the Hindu religion, and I thought if this be so I should find an answer in this book to my query; and thus began my study of the *Bhagavad-Gita.* I approached the book with a mind prepossessed by no previous ideas about any philosophy, and had no theory of my own for which I sought any support in the *Gita.*

"A person whose mind is prepossessed by certain ideas, reads the book with a prejudiced mind; for instance, when a Christian reads it, he does not want to know what the *Gita* says but wants to find out if there are any principles in the *Gita* which he has already met with in the Bible, and if so the conclusion he rushes to is that the *Gita* was copied from the Bible. I have dealt with this topic in *Gita-Rahasya.* When you want to read and understand a book, especially a great work like the *Gita,* you must approach it with an unprejudiced and unprepossessed mind. To do this, I know, is one of the most difficult things.

"Those who profess to do it may have a lurking thought or prejudice in their minds which vitiates the reading of the book to some extent. However, I am describing to you the frame of mind one must get into if one wants to reach at the truth; and however difficult it be, it has to be done. The next thing one has to do is to take into consideration the time and the circumstances in which the book was written and the purpose for which the book was written. In short, the book must not be read devoid of its context. This is especially true about a book like *Bhagavad-Gita.*

"Various commentators have put as many interpretations on the book, and surely the writer or composer could not have written or composed the book for so many interpretations being put on it. He must have put one meaning and one purpose running through the book, and that I have tried to find out. I believe I have succeeded in it, because having no theory of mine for which I sought any support from the book so universally respected, I had no reason to twist the text to suit my theory. There has not been a commentator of the *Gita* who did not advocate a pet theory of his own and has not tried to support the same by showing that the *Bhagavad-Gita* lent him support.

"The conclusion I have come to is that *Gita* advocates the performance of action in this world even after the actor has achieved the highest union with the Supreme Deity by *jnana* (knowledge) or *bhakti* (devotion). This action must be done to keep the world going by the right path of evolution which the Creator has destined the world to follow. In order that the action may not bind the actor, it must be done with the aim of helping His purpose, and without any attachment to the coming result. This I hold is the lesson of the *Gita*.

"*Jnana-Yoga* there is, yes. *Bhakti-Yoga* there is, yes. Who says not ? But they are both subservient to the *Karma-yoga* preached in the *Gita*. If the *Gita* was preached to desponding Arjuna to make him ready for the fight—for the action—how can it be said that the ultimate lesson of the great book is *bhakti* or *jnana* alone? In fact, there is a blending of all these Yogas in the *Gita;* and as the air is not oxygen or hydrogen, or any other element alone, but a composition of all these in a certain proportion, so in the *Gita* all these Yogas are blended into one.

"I differ from almost all the commentators when I say that the *Gita* enjoins Action even after the perfection in *jnana* and *bhakti* is attained and the Deity is reached through these media. Now, there is a fundamental unity underlying the Logos (*Ishvara*), man, and world. The world is in existence because the Logos has willed it so. It is His Will that holds it together. Man strives to gain union with God; and when this union is achieved, the individual will merges in the mighty Universal Will. When this is achieved, will the individual say : 'I shall do no Action and I shall not help the world'—the world which is, because the Will with which he has sought union has willed it to be so? It does not stand to reason. It is not I who say so : the *Gita* says so.

"Shri Krishna himself says that there is nothing in all the three worlds that He need acquire, and *still* he acts. He acts because if He did not, the world will be ruined. If man seeks unity with the Deity, he must necessarily seek unity with the interests of the world also, and work for it. If he does not, then the unity is not perfect, because there is union beween two elements out of the three (man and Deity) and the third (the world) is left out. I have thus solved the question for myself and I hold that serving the world, and thus serving His Will, is the surest way of Salvation; and this way can be followed by remaining *in* the world and not going away from it."

(*Summary of a Speech*)

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